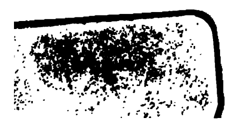
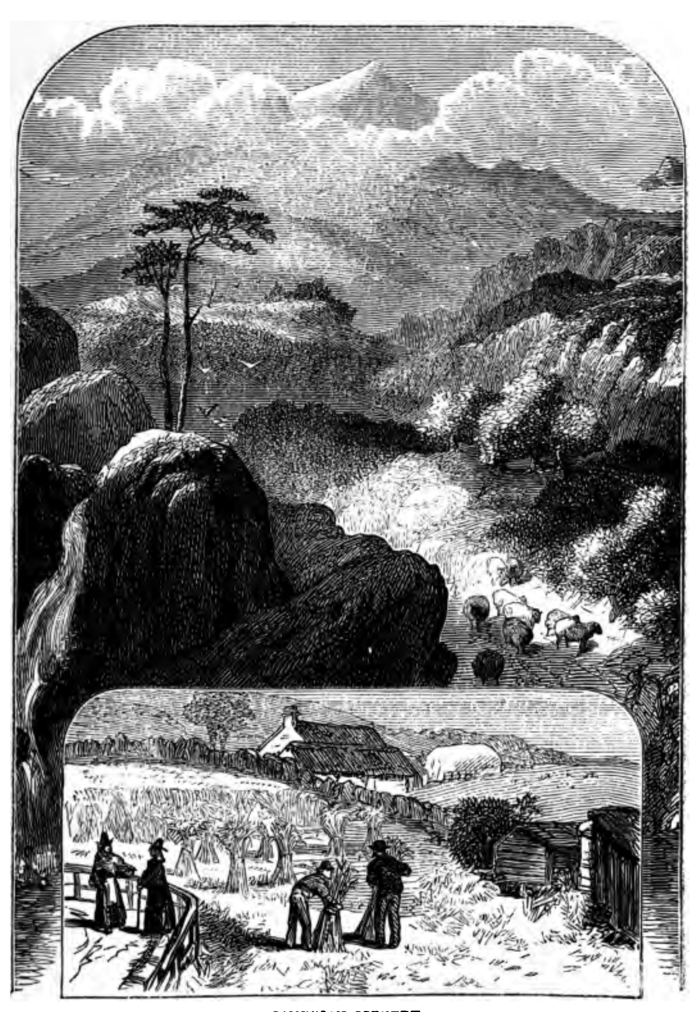
COALS AND COLLIERS

OR

HOW WE GET THE FUEL FOR OUR FIRES


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CAMBRIAN SCENERY.

COALS AND COLLIERS;

OR,

HOW WE GET THE FUEL FOR OUR FIRES.

BY

S. J. FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF 'THE LANCASTERS AND THEIR FRIENDS.'

'New light cometh through a small opening.'

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DEDICATORY

THIS book is respectfully dedicated to the masters, managers, and workmen of the collieries of England and Wales, with the hope that a stronger bond of union may exist between employers and employed; and with an earnest desire that the men who each day of their lives descend the dark abyss, not knowing that they shall ever return to the light of day, may have the sympathy and prayers of Christian men.

It should be said that the principal characters pourtrayed are not fictitious, but men and women with whom the writer had intimate acquaintance.

The incidents given are fresh in the memory of persons living in the locality. The bravery of many of the colliers is not overdrawn, or the recklessness of others exaggerated.

With the hope that the same kindly feeling that met *The Lancasters and their Friends* may be given to *Coals and Colliers*, I venture to place it before the public.

SARAH JANE FITZGERALD.







COAL AND COLLIERS.

CHAPTER I.

PANSY'S HOLIDAY.

'One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.
* * * *
Enough of science and of art!
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth! And bring with you a heart
That watches and receives!'—WORDSWORTH.

'A WHOLE fortnight did you say, Harry? Are you sure that you have not fallen asleep in the office and dreamed it?'

These questions were put by pretty little Mrs. Osbourn to her husband, Mr. Harry Osbourn, one summer's evening, on his return from business, as she stood, with flushed, happy face, holding the hat and gloves she had just taken from his hands.

Pushing her gently before him into the neat little parlour where his slippers were laid in front of the easy-chair, he answered:

'Yes, a whole fortnight! And although, as you

suggest, I *might* have fallen asleep and dreamed it, yet I did *not*.'

'Tell me about it, then, Harry, while I fill the tea-pot; tell me every bit, from the beginning,—what Mr. Cardross said to you, and what you said to him. I am almost afraid it is too good to be true.'

Harry Osbourn laughed, and said:

'Well, now, when Mr. Cardross was leaving the office this afternoon, he turned into my room and said, "Osbourn, I am not quite up to the mark, although I am not ill. My wife thinks a few weeks' holiday will be of advantage to me; so we have decided to take a look at the Paris Exhibition, and then consider what we shall do for another week or two."

'I of course said rest would do him good, and urged him to take the holiday soon. To this he replied: "While I am away, you will have the sole charge, Osbourn, and be rather closely tied to the offices. Suppose you fortify yourself for it by a fortnight's run somewhere, and take that bonny little wife of yours with you. First, accept this for railway expenses." And to convince you that I was then, and am now, wide awake, look here!' and he put in her hands the crisp bank-note which his kind-hearted employer had that afternoon placed on his desk when he bade him take his holiday.

'So hurrah for the green fields, the bright hedgerows, and the daisies and buttercups, to say nothing of birds and bees and butterflies, of which you speak so often, Pansy. But,' he added with softened, grateful face, 'is not Mr. Cardross a noble fellow and a good master?'

'Yes, indeed he is!' said the equally grateful

wife; and taking her husband's face between both hands, 'and is not my husband a noble fellow and a good servant, respected and valued, as is evident? A good servant makes a good master,' she said, proudly. Then, drawing her own chair close to her husband's, she said eagerly, 'Where are we to go, Harry, and when?'

'Have you no choice yourself, Pansy? Think.'

'If I may choose, Harry, I should say North Wales. You promised me once, before we were married, that you would take me some time to see your mother's relatives, who live there. Would not this be a good opportunity?'

'I am pleased that your choice lies there, dear; for in addition to its being the birthplace and also the burying-place of my mother, all my relatives, that ever I knew, live in the Llanroth valley. My good uncle Cadwallador begged that I would take you to see them, if you remember, when he came to our wedding, and that is now full six months ago. Why, what old folks we must be growing! You really would like that, Pansy?'

'Indeed I should! I have heard so much of the Welsh hills and vales, and the strange costumes of some of the people. I think, apart from the pleasure of once more meeting Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallador, I should prefer North Wales to any place just now.'

'Be it so, then, dear: you will make yourself acquainted with a phase of life of which, with your city bringing up, you can have formed no idea. I think you know it is a coal district?'

'Yes, you told me so one morning, when I said I wished coals were cheaper.'

'I remember, Pansy; and my impression is that when you see how coals are got, and the peril there

is to the colliers in getting them, you will never complain of their being *dear* any more.'

'You like me to be careful, Harry. That is all I mean when I wish coals were cheaper. Of course I shall understand more about things when I have been amongst them. But the colliers are very bad men, are they not? Rude and rough? But I suppose I shall be all right with you.'

As Pansy, who had been born and brought up in London, had but a vague idea of what a coal-mine was, she readily consented to go anywhere, provided always her husband was with her.

'How soon can you go, Pansy? You can be ready in two days, I suppose?' he asked.

'O yes. I will see about everything to-morrow.'

'That is well. I shall write to my aunt to-night, and tell her to expect us on Thursday. We need not wait for a reply. Now,' he continued, as he took a *Bradshaw* from his pocket, 'this is the route. We reach Liverpool about noon, where we can, if you like, remain two hours. That will be as long as you will care to remain in a place of shops, as you have lived so long in London. We will drive to the Pier, and cross the Mersey by the ferry-boat to Birkenhead, book from there to Chester, where we change for another line. Then we shall have a pretty long run past stations with queer names, and at the last station Mr. Cadwallador will meet us, and we shall have a ten miles' drive through a most lovely country.'

Thursday morning sees our travellers on their way. Like sensible young folk, they had determined to make the very most of their holiday. The day is fine, and the run from —— to Liverpool very pleasant. There, the river, with its ships, the large docks, and the busy men and women, carry

Pansy's mind away to London, recalling steam-boat rides on the Thames, excursions from London to Hampton Court Palace, and all the pleasures so well known to Londoners. The young wife remembers, too, that there is resting beneath the turf in one of the cemeteries of the great city, one who would have rejoiced, had she lived, to see her child's present happiness.

Harry guesses where his wife's thoughts run, and will not disturb her reverie, but allows her to dream on until the train draws near to the ancient city of Chester.





CHAPTER II.

A BRIEF GLANCE AT CHESTER.

'It may be considered as the mother of Liverpool; for at a time when nothing was yet known of Liverpool commerce on the Mersey, the fame of Chester and her trade on the Dee was widely spread in Germany, Spain, and France.'—Köhl.

'ROUSE up, Pansy,' Harry cried cheerfully; 'we are close to one of the quaintest old cities in England. I know of no place so full of interest as "Rare Old Chester."'

'You know it, then, Harry?' she asks.

'Very well indeed. I will call a cab, and we will drive through the principal streets. After you have seen the "Rows," and the carvings on the fronts of the old houses, the "God's Providence" house, and the "Old Palace," and had one brief glance at the Cathedral, the sight of which alone is well worth a long journey, we will go on the city walls.'

'Can this be done, Harry, in the time?'

'Yes; we have three hours, nearly; we are not expected at Llanroth until about seven o'clock.'

All this is done, and in due time Harry Osbourn and his wife found themselves on Chester walls.

'What a curious and interesting old place! Why, these walls are in some places cut out of the solid rock, Harry.'

'Yes; and you are right when you say it is a curious old place. It has its history, like all other

old places, and as a matter of course has had its changes. It seems strange to think that, long before these solid walls were cut, this and all the surrounding country, where we see the homes of cultivated and educated men and women, was covered with forest trees, brake and wilderness, the haunt of foxes and wolves.'

'The Druids would meet here, too, I should imagine,' said Mrs. Osbourn.

'Yes,' said he; 'and step over a few hundred years to the time when the Romans came and made themselves a station here. These walls and these very streets were cut by the Romans, as you have seen, from the solid rock. They were capital road-cutters, certainly. Here, too, have been battles fought between the Britons and Romans, then between the Saxons and Danes, not to mention the times when jealousies and contentions arose among the Britons themselves and their petty princes. There has been plenty of bloodshed both within and without these walls. Let us go on a few yards. Here is a sort of tower where King Charles stood when his army was defeated by Cromwell at Rowton Moor. How would he feel, as he saw his soldiers driven back, break rank, lose heart, and fly before the stout Roundheads!'

'Is Rowton Moor so near,' asked Pansy, 'that Charles could see the defeat?'

'Yes; he would be able from where we now stand to see which way the battle went. But let us walk forward a little; you will have a good view of the river. Our cab will be at the foot of the next set of steps.'

The Dee, clear and sparkling, is seen to wind its serpentine course round the Roodeye, past the Castle, and under the beautiful suspension bridge.

'This, then,' said Pansy, is "Fair Deva's Stream." It is worthy of all that poet can say. It is beautiful. Where does it rise, I wonder?'



'God's Providence' House.

'In Merionethshire. It is very small at first; but as it goes on, it receives from small tributaries, water that makes its stream pretty strong, until it reaches Bala Lake. I am told that it rushes through the middle of that piece of water, and afterwards passes through some of the finest scenery of North Wales.'

'Do you remember the story of Edgar being rowed on the Dee by the subject kings? My old History of England says he was rowed from his palace in Chester to the monastery of St. John, and then back to his palace. Where was the monastery? And where the palace?'

'I do not know, dear, where they were situated, but, like many other places, they must have fallen into decay. When is it said to have occurred?'

'About the middle of the tenth century, I think; so it is very likely that all that could remind us of such an event is the river itself. As soon as we go

home again, Harry, we must read all we can about this fine old place.'

'I shall be pleased to do so, Pansy. We shall find that this city has given some grand and worthy names to the world. Earls of Chester, Red Cross Knight, and saintly Abbot. We shall find that lordly men and high-born dames kept festive hall, hunted, hawked, and drew the bow on their own broad acres. We shall see, too, that Chester is still proud of the names of Dutton, Eaton, Stanley, and others well and honourably known to our country. But we have lingered almost too long, now we have only just time to drive to the train.'

In a very short time our holiday-takers are on their way to the hospitable home of Harry's uncle, Mr. Cadwallador.

The railway is laid through a fertile and well-



The Chester 'Rows.'

wooded country, where stately oaks and spreading chestnut-trees wave their branches in the soft breeze. Glimpses of rare loveliness are caught as they fly all too swiftly through the cuttings or along the embankments.

Soon indications of the pursuits of the Llanroth people are to be seen. Thick volumes of smoke ascend from tall chimneys. Black beams are seen surmounted by large wheels, and on the railway sidings are scores of coal-wagons, some full, but more empty, which have been returned from some town or other, to be in their turn filled with the mineral which is the wealth of the district.

Strange and uncouth sights and sounds greet them. Odd-looking men, speaking in a tongue which sounds barbarous to Pansy, are busy everywhere. Before she can say one-half of what she would, the train runs into the station, where the first thing they see is the comely face of Mrs. Cadwallador.

Giving one hand to her nephew, she kissed Pansy heartily, saying, 'Come, my dears; your uncle is outside the station with the wagonette. The horse does not like the noise of the trains.'

A hearty welcome is given to both the young people, and in a very few minutes they are comfortably seated, and chatting as the strong horse toils up the rather steep hill that separates the station from the valley of Llanroth, on one side of which is situated the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallador, whose windows command a view of hill and dale, meadow land and brawling river. Beautiful indeed it is for situation, even among the many beautiful homesteads in the Llanroth valley.

'And now,' said their kind hostess, 'you must not feel strange, but make yourselves at home. Do

just what you like best. You see, Pansy, God did not think fit to send any children to our home; and I may not perhaps know what young folks like. So now if you will please yourselves you will please us.'

Good Mrs. Cadwallador! She always underrated herself. She had no idea how much her young friends valued her counsel and loved her society.





CHAPTER III.

THE COLLIERY.

'A mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are hard as iron bands.'—LONGFELLOW.

THE warm summer sun had shed its bright beams into Pansy's bed-room before she awoke from her first sleep. The moment she did so, however, she sprang to her feet, and, drawing aside the white drapery, opened the casement, to obtain a better view of the beautiful panorama. Lovely at all times is the valley of Llanroth, with its surrounding hills, but especially does it seem so this fair morning.

A rosy hue was spread like a mantle on every mountain-peak and tree-top, touching lightly the gleaming river as it sped on its onward course. The shadows in the valley and under the thick foliage afforded a striking contrast to the warm colouring of the morning sun. The sheep that looked on soberly, while the lambkins sported about them; the cattle that grazed in the meadows; the song of the thrush and the blackbird; the melody of the lark, which she had watched until she could trace its upward flight no longer,—were new to the city-bred girl, and awoke within her heart a feeling of deep reverence as she looked silently on.

Presently her husband's voice is heard: 'Do you like the prospect? Are you pleased?'

'Do I like it? Am I pleased? O, Harry dear! It seems to draw me so near to God. I never loved Him so much as I do now. My heart keeps saying, "My Father made them all."'

'That is the right way to look at it. If you will be quick, Pansy, we can have a short walk before breakfast is ready. Come, let us catch the "Prime," as grand old Milton calls the early morning.'

A walk under the Welsh hills, within sound of the lowing oxen and bleating sheep, while the mountain breezes fan your cheeks, and the sparkling dew-drops tremble on every thorn and blade of grass, must be indulged in to be understood. Our young friends, enchanted with the beauty of the scene, ramble further than they at first intended, and on their return find that breakfast is waiting, which, it is needless to add, they fall-to with quickened appetites.

Mr. Cadwallador explains to them some of the strange noises they had heard during their walk. 'The colliery,' he said, 'is just on the other side of the hill, to the right; sometimes we hear the trucks roll away, and sometimes the whistle from the engine, for the colliery is, of course, a very busy place. Have you ever seen anything of the kind, Pansy?'

'Never until yesterday,' replied Pansy; 'when we were coming along, Harry said those big wheels belonged to collieries.'

'Neither have I, properly,' said Harry; 'though I have so many relatives who are in some way or other connected with them. I should very much like to walk as far, if we may. So I think you would, Pansy.'

'Very much indeed; only, as you know, Harry,

I am rather afraid of the men, they are sure to be very rough and coarse.'

Mr. Cadwallador laughed merrily at Pansy's fear, and asked, 'Are you afraid of me?'

'Of course not,' she said. 'Why should I be?'

'Because,' said Mr. Cadwallador, 'I have been a collier myself. I began to work in a coal-mine when I was ten years of age. Look here,' he continued, as he turned the white cuff he wore back from his wrist, showing a scar of a dark blue colour; 'do you see this? and this?' and he bent down that she might see a similar one on the back of his neck. 'I got this one on my wrist when I was twenty years old. My arm was broken in two places by the fall of a portion of the roof in the mine. This on my neck I got some years afterwards, when, as you may suppose, I very narrowly escaped with my life. I dare say every third man you meet here will bear such marks as those I have shown you. However, that is not to the point. I only intended to say that I do not think you need fear the colliers. If you go, I shall go with you. So will your aunt, I dare say. Eh, Eliza?'

'Yes, I should like the walk,' she answered, 'and while you are showing these young folks the works, I will go and enquire after some of the old people. Suppose we go this afternoon. We can contrive to be there when the men are coming up. You will be surprised, and amused too, I expect.'

'Have you ever been before?' asks Pansy.

'Hundreds of times! I used to take my husband's dinner when, as he has told you, he was a working collier. After he became manager, I used to go down to his office frequently; and now that he is part proprietor, I often go to see the old people. I like to speak a word to the old men, for despite

their black faces, there are men of sterling worth among them.'

Pansy gets interested as Mrs. Cadwallador speaks, and says 'she shall *so much* like to go, that she may understand more about the men and their perilous work.'

'You will learn nothing of the perils of a collier's life from the surface,' said Mr. Cadwallador. 'If you really wish to see in any measure what the poor fellows are subject to, you should go down the mine and see for yourself.'

'I told Pansy that I should like her to see the interior of a mine, if you do not think she would be alarmed,' said Harry. 'I am quite sure I should like it myself.'

'I shall not be frightened, Harry,' said the young wife. 'I have been through the Thames Tunnel several times, and I have seen people go down in the diving-bell at the Polytechnic.'

The amused smile she saw on the faces of those around her, told Pansy that her ideas on coal-mines were a little vague, before Mr. Cadwallador said, 'But you will find this very different from anything you have ever seen, my child, and you must see it to understand it.'

It is decided, then, that, when tea is over, the long summer evening shall be devoted to an inspection of the colliery.

On reaching the colliery, Mrs. Osbourn's holiday thoughts of the Thames Tunnel and the Polytechnic vanished like a dream.

'What a dreadful place!' she cried, as she gathered up her skirts with both hands, lest they should touch the dirty roads. 'It is fearfully dirty!'

'Coals are not very clean, as a rule,' said Harry, laughing.



Engine-House.

'I know, Harry; but *everything* here is quite black.'

'How can it be otherwise?' said Mr. Cadwallador. 'For every one of the three hundred men that are employed at the Llanroth mine is constantly getting and sending up these "black diamonds." There are perpetual clouds of black dust floating about the place.'

As the party draws nearer, the young people perceive that their relative is right. There are grimy-looking offices, which contain grimy desks, grimy books, and, with few exceptions, grimy clerks. There are dark-faced men and boys passing hither and thither, conversing in loud tones and in an uncouth language, altogether unintelligible to them. There are hundreds of coal-trucks standing on the tramways that lead to the station, which lies some distance off. Strong horses, drawing loaded carts, go steadily about their business, apparently very good friends with their drivers. A tall chimney gives out its usual volumes of black smoke, that roll heavily along, while the white vapour from the engine rises in pretty fantastic shapes and melts into thin air. The visitors become interested, and Pansy has forgotten the place is so black, or that her gloves are hopelessly ruined. Questions are asked and answered as they pass on to where the 'Headstocks' are placed over the pit-mouth.

'What is this queer-looking thing with a big wheel?' asks Mrs. Osbourn. 'I saw some as we came along the line yesterday.'

'O,' said her relative, laughing, 'that queer-looking thing, as you call it, is part of the front door to the mine. We keep the key in yonder building, where you see the white vapour issuing. Come a little nearer, and I will explain what I mean.'

Placing his hand upon one of the huge beams which supported the pulleys, he said, 'Look how these strong beams are built and riveted over and into each other. They are called the "Headstocks," or head-gear. They are fifty feet high, and support the pulleys, or, as you said, wheels that are on the top.'

'I saw them going round quite fast, just a minute ago,' said Pansy.

'Yes, no doubt. You will see them move again in a moment. Well, these same pulleys are fifteen feet in diameter, and have running over them, as you see, a rope made of wire. Look at it, and see how many separate lengths of wire go to make the rope. See how it is twisted and woven tightly and evenly together, so that it may glide smoothly and safely round the pulleys. Now, you see that one end is right over the shaft (which I will tell you about presently), and that the other end passes into the engine-house over there. This rope, as well as the timbers that support it, must needs be very strong. This is between four and five inches wide, and will support a weight of ten tons.'

Harry looks doubtful, and remarks that it is but a slender thing to bear so great a weight. He is told that, in preparing a rope of the kind, it is always calculated that an inch of rope is capable of bearing so many pounds weight, so that from the entire quantity it is at once known what the rope is able to sustain. This we are now looking at is made to bear without hurt a strain of ten tons.

'Now let me show you what I called the front door to the mine. Give me your hand, and you shall peep down. Be careful, child!' he said, as he led her towards the 'pit-mouth.'

'Horrible!' said Pansy, shrinking from the dark abyss at her feet. 'It is like a deep, dark grave.'

'As it sometimes is,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'you are standing right over it yourself; but you are quite safe, my dear,' he added, as she was about to move from the close vicinity of the terrible place down which she had looked. 'I ought to have told you that the shaft is round, and is well and carefully walled from top to bottom. These two

openings, then, in the platform on which you stand, and which, as you saw a minute ago, are just under the pulleys, are the ways into the mine itself. To ensure safe and steady descent and ascent, strong timber or iron guide-rods are fixed from the top to the bottom of the shafts, in such a way that it is impossible for anything going up and down to clash. In fact, these guides separate the shaft into what we may call two tunnels. The ropes we have just seen go up or down them all day long, with their full or empty tubs, one going up, while the other goes down.'

'Take care, Sir!' cried a man standing near; at the same time both Mr. and Mrs. Osbourn notice that the rope which had been running swiftly round the pulleys, becomes slower in its movements; then, that chains which support what they are told is called a cage, come in sight; in another instant, the strong and iron-bound vehicle slowly emerges from the awful chasm, and is on a level with the platform on which they stand.

'What a fearful place to hang over!' they cry.

'Very,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'but while you wonder, the man who stood by has placed under the cage several strong catches to support it, while the full trucks of coal are run off, and the empty ones are put in their places. And do you see that as the cage with its load rose to the surface, it took up with it the fence that was round the pit-mouth, and over which you leaned to look down?'

Yes, they had perceived that before.

'Well, then, this cage will go back in a moment, and will leave the fence in precisely the same place from which it took it as it rose.'

'So it does, I declare! And the cage is out of sight in a moment,' said Mrs. Osbourn.

'That one is,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'but, as I said before, as one descends, another ascends. Here it is close by. Take care, Harry!'

'How very quickly it is done! How many minutes is it since the last full cage came up?'

'From the moment of unloading, running up empty trucks on the cage at the top, and more full ones at the bottom, to again reaching the surface, occupies only one minute,—scarcely that. No time is lost, I assure you, Harry. Each man knows his work. You see, some of the men take the loaded wagons off the cage. In an instant, it is re-loaded with empties, and is on its way down the shaft again. These men here are "screening" the coals as they receive them. That is done by tipping them down this frame. You see it is composed of iron bars, which cross each other, leaving spaces of about three parts of an inch in size. If you will look, you will see that there are two sets of rails laid down to this place, and that two rows of wagons are on them. One is just under the "screen," and receives the small coal, or slack, as it runs through the spaces; while the larger lumps run to the bottom of the screen, and fall into the wagons on the outer rails. Thus you see the mineral is ready for the home market or for export. But now, having shown you the door to the mine and how the coal is brought up, I will show you the key. You saw where the wire rope ran close to the large boilers?'

'Yes, *that* is the place,' said Pansy. 'I think I understand. The rope is worked by the engine within. But I should be dreadfully afraid of undertaking the task of winding it up and down. I should either leave the cage half way up, or run it over the pulley.'

'I dare say you would. Careless men have done such things before now, destroying valuable lives as well as doing serious injury to the machinery. But step inside the engine-house, and you will see how we take care to avoid such accidents.'

They enter, and see that the man who is on duty there, has his hand on the lever of the engine, whose mighty pulse throbs in obedience to his will, as he propels or reverses the handle. Just before him is fixed the 'Indicator,' by which clever contrivance he knows exactly the position of the cage in its passage up the shaft. When it is within a few yards of the top, the 'Indicator' gives notice by striking on a bell. The man at once shuts off steam, and applying the brake, allows the cage to come gently to the place where it is intended to remain for a short time.

'Will, here, is a steady fellow, who understands his work, and knows something of the value of human life; do you not?' said Mr. Cadwallador, addressing the man kindly.

'I hope so, Sir,' he replied, with a gratified smile.

'But I should be afraid of the rope breaking,' said Pansy, 'although it is so strong.'

'We have not had that misfortune at Llanroth,' said Mr. Cadwallador. 'We test it every day. We have a good set of men, and a capital manager, who attends well to matters. So that it must be pure accident if such a thing did happen. Well, now do you understand why I call these things the door of the mine and the key to open the door?'

'Yes, thank you, I do,' said Mrs. Osbourn. 'It is very wonderful. I always thought that coals were in a sort of cave, or something like it.'

'So they are, my dear, when you get at them. I

have only shown you the way into the mine. The workings are many fathoms below.'

As they leave the engine-house, they are joined by Mrs. Cadwallador, who has seen her old men and women, and they walk together to the pit-mouth, for some of the men are about to be 'brought to bank.'





CHAPTER IV.

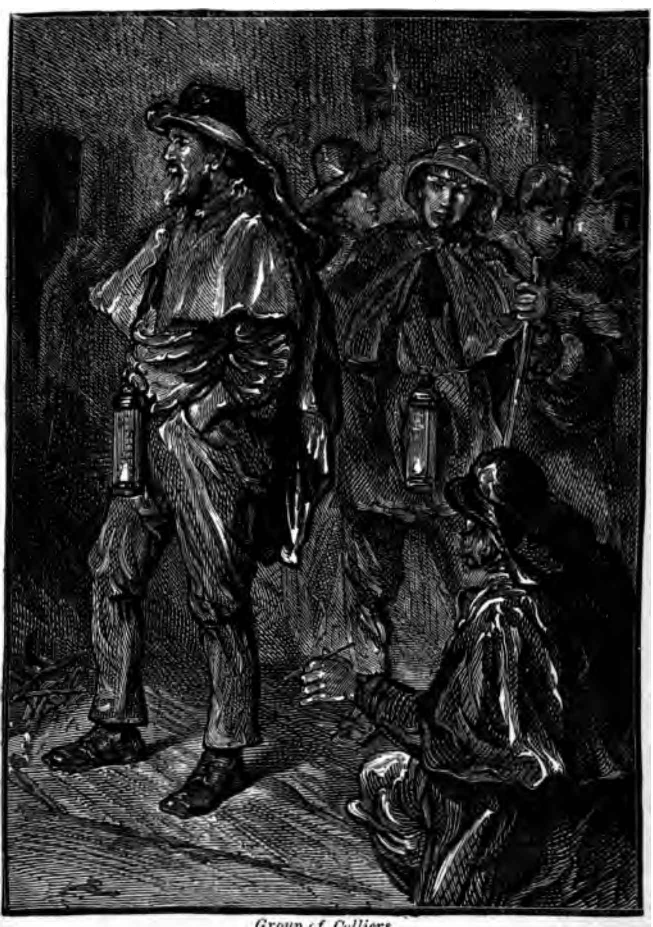
A LOOK AT THE WORKERS.

'Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close.'—LONGFELLOW.

THE iron-bound cage is seen to rise more slowly than when laden with coals, and the man whose duty it is to place the 'catches' under it, looks for the special instant more anxiously. In a moment it is seen that some ten men have been brought up. They leap lightly to the earth, and go their way 'winking and blinking,' for the light of the sun affects them after the many hours of darkness during which they have been immured. The cage runs up and down several times, until all are brought up for the night.

A careless lot of men, on the whole, they appear to be; and, as is seen in a few minutes, like the entire population of the valley, fond of *smoking*. This, however, must not be indulged in on the premises; for in conspicuous places about the pit-bank are posted printed notices, that 'no smoking is allowed, and no pipes to be taken into the pit.' As soon as the men are clear of the works, however, there is a general lighting up. Where they keep their pipes and matches seems a mystery to a

stranger; but they have snug little holes and corners in the lanes and hedges, where they hide their rather doubtful luxury on their way to their work,



Group of Colliers.

and so know exactly where to find them on their return home in the evening. The satisfaction with which the poor fellows inhale the tobacco fumes, makes it rather hard to say a man should not smoke. Mr. Cadwallador is known to most of them, and gives them a pleasant smile in return for the rude salute they give to both ladies as they pass. They all are as black as coal and coal-dust can make them. Each man carries a 'Davy-lamp' and his 'tea-can,' and sometimes, too, some other implement of his calling. Friend joins friend as they go along. Wicked and reckless are many of them, as is to be noted by the vile words mixed so freely in their conversation; while others are men of grave manners and decent appearance, even in their sooty clothing, thick shoes, and battered wide-awakes. These last take little notice of their rougher companions, except to give a grave shake of the head, or say in graver tones, 'Take care, chaps! take care what you are doing!' Often indeed are these kindly rebukes met with scornful laughter, or with cries of 'Ranter,' or 'Methodist,' as the foolish fellows pass out of sight. The staid men, however, go away in little companies, conversing together on things pleasing to themselves, chiefly about their poultry, potato crops, or their flower gardens. And indeed the roses that run round the doors, and in some instances climb to the very roof of the low cottages, as well as the more highly-cultivated ones that grow in their gardens side by side with the stocks, fuchsias, carnations, and geraniums which adorn the daisy-bordered plots of the colliers' homes, might be the pride of many larger and grander homesteads than those of the dark-looking workmen who were passing our friends. Mrs. Osbourn soon discovered the difference that existed between the

men, though they all 'burrowed' alike in the dismal depth of the coal-pit. Sometimes she caught a word or two which gave her to understand that some of these uncouth men who carried the 'Davy,' the black tea-can, and the pick,—the men whose faces were grimy, whose hands were hard and horny, and whose clothes were shabby and worn,—were men of high religious principle. She mentioned this to her relative.

'Ah, yes! my dear child,' he replied, 'there are in that company some of the truest Christians that God ever blessed the world with. They are the chief supporters of the various places of worship around; many of them are Local-preachers, Sunday-school teachers; indeed, they are Home Missionaries.'

'What are they, then?' asked Pansy. 'Do they go to church or chapel?'

'The Lord does not want them all in one particular church, or chapel either, I believe, Pansy, so that He has them in various spheres of usefulness. Some are stanch and true Churchmen, others are Methodists, many are Independents: I call them all model men,' said Mr. Cadwallador.

'Good evening, Mum!' says a tall man with head thrown back, and strong, brawny limbs; and as he spoke he touched his brimless hat, and stood respectfully before the ladies. Mrs. Cadwallador spoke to him as to a friend. She calls him John, and enquires about the school, and about the Temperance Society; asks how the funds hold out, and how the singing-class goes on. With a pleased face the good fellow tells her that things are fairly prosperous, but that they could do a deal more if it were not for 'the drink.' 'Ay! that is against us,' he remarked; 'I know if that could be stopped,

many more would be saved. It is such a temptation to the young men.'

After a few encouraging words from Mrs. Cadwallador, and orders to come to her when the funds ran low, the man, again touching his hat, went away. Like the rest, he was black and shabby, carried the 'Davy,' the can, and the pick. Under the rough exterior, however, there beat the heart of a true soldier of the Cross, who, as will be seen, counted not his life dear to him where his Master's cause was concerned. The way to his cottage lay through a green meadow, known as the 'Echo' field. This field formed a gradual ascent quite to the door of his home. Before entering this meadow, there is a short distance to go through the lane leading to the colliery. In this lane John joins a little man who had waited for him at a short distance from where he had stopped to speak to our lady friends. As they walk along, John breaks into song, loud and clear. The words that float on the evening breeze, and penetrate the blue canopy overhead, are these:

'My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.'

The little man, who is known by the name of 'Tum,' now takes up the strain, and in a weak but pleasant voice joins in the chorus, with apparent content:

'I love Jesus! I love Jesus! I love Jesus! Yes I do!
I love Jesus! He's my Saviour!
Jesus smiles, and loves me too!'

No doubt both of them love Him, if the face be the index of the mind!

But now the two men reach the stone stile where John must leave his friend to go up the 'Echo' field. 'Good-night, Tum,' says the first singer, 'remember me when it's well with you.'

'Ay, ay,' said the little man; 'and you remember me!'

Once in the meadow, John resumes his song:

> 'Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
> I'd break thorough every foe,
> The wings of love, and arms of faith,
> Would bear me conqueror through!'

And the Echo took up the words, 'Conqueror through!'

'Tum' had not gone so far down the lane, but that he heard John's song, and instantly commenced the words, 'I love Jesus,' and sang them with all his soul. Thereat, honest John lifted his black hand towards heaven, and shouted 'Praise God!' and the echo repeated, 'Praise God!'

A huge fellow, also a miner, just now passing the stile that leads into the meadow, catches sight of John's figure and hears his cheery voice. Addressing himself to a man who walks by his side, he says, 'I know what I should like to do. I should like to give that chap' (pointing to John) 'a good thrashing!'

'Why?' asked the other: 'what do you want to do that for? He is a very decent, good man, as you ought to know. I remember he was very good to you, Ned, when you were bad with the fever. The neighbours say that he sat up with you many a night when he should have been in bed; and every one knows that he dug your garden, and planted it for you, because you were too weak to do it yourself.'

'O!' sneered the ungrateful fellow, 'I suppose he has made a boast of that, has he?'

'That he has not,' returned the other, emphatically; 'he is not a man that tells every thing he does for a neighbour. It was good enough to see; gardens are not dug at midnight, but in the daytime.'

A look of impatience came over Ned's face, and he rudely bade his fellow-workman hold his peace.

'I will not,' said the man, fairly roused by the unthankfulness of his companion; 'I should like to ask you, who it was that used to sit and read the Bible to your poor girl who died;—who it was that came every day to pray with her and comfort her, poor little wench! John Roberts is a Methodist, and I am a Churchman, and so was my father before me, and I hope to live and die true to my church. But our Parson says to me, "That young woman will get to heaven, and God will give John the honour of helping her on the way there. I only wish," he says, "all my parishioners were like him; he is a good man." And if our Parson does not know a good man, I should like to know who does,' said the true-hearted man, with a glow of triumph on his swarthy face.

'What does he know,' said Ned, 'more than any one else?'

'Well, if it comes to that, he knows more than he learned at college, Ned. He knows that your girl died with her head on John's wife's shoulder; and that when her flesh and her heart were failing, Jane Roberts kept telling her all the precious promises out of God's Word to cheer her. He knows that; and he knows who comforted your poor wretched wife when the poor girl was gone, and when her husband who should have comforted her, was at the

Blue Anchor. Nay, lad, don't lift your hand at me. He knows how you have paid John for all this. *That's* what my Parson knows. He knows that if there was, or is, anything you could do to annoy or vex him, you have done it; if there is anything spiteful or cruel to say, you have said it; if there was anything likely to do him harm, you have done it. Nay! I shall not shut up until I have said what I have wanted to say to you many a day past. But, Ned, all the spite and ill-will has not gone into the ground. God has seen it, and it will be remembered at the judgment bar.'

'What a fuss you make. Anybody would dig a bit of potato plot,' cried Ned, in a loud and angry voice.

'No, not anybody, Ned. I don't think *you* would. Still, a man might do that, and it might be forgotten, or it might be paid back some way or other. But, Ned, only few can give solid help in the dying hour: and I think those people that can forget the help and comfort given to their dying friends, must be very bad, and very hard-hearted, and can never have learned the value of a soul.'

'Did you find all that in your Prayer-book?' sneered Ned, though not so impudently as before.

'Yes; in that and my Bible. There is a lot more of the same sort. You would be a different man, if you read those books yourself, Ned!'

'But what right,' resumed Ned, sulkily, 'has he to pretend to be a better man than I am? Tell me that.'

'He does not pretend,' returned the other; 'he is a better man every way; better in body, better in life. You quite amuse me when you talk of thrashing him. Bless you, my lad, John would double you up in a twinkling if he wanted!' And

the honest fellow laughed aloud, to Ned's great discomfiture.

'Could he?' he roared; 'could he? No! nor any such sneaking Methodist; nor your crack Parson either!'

At this point in the road stood the Blue Anchor. Here, as a matter of course, Ned turned in, while the worthy fellow who had dealt so faithfully with him, went on to his peaceful home.

All the colliers were now out of sight, when Mr. Cadwallador said, 'Pansy, the men did not alarm you, as you thought they would?'

'Not in the least, uncle! Really some of them are quite nice, and such good singers.'

'Ay, capital!' returned her uncle, as he turned to shake hands with a well-dressed young man, whom he introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Osbourn as Mr. Arkwright, the manager of the colliery.

After a few words about the works had been exchanged, Mr. Arkwright said, 'I have some dialling to do below to-morrow: will you come down with me, Mr. Osbourn? You too, Madam' (turning to Pansy), 'if it is agreeable?'

'Is it safe?' asked Pansy, with some nervousness.

'I would not venture to ask you to go down if I thought otherwise, Mrs. Osbourn,' he answered, smiling.

Pansy looked at her husband, who rightly interpreted the glance, and at once replied, 'For my wife and myself, then, Mr. Arkwright, I may say we shall be pleased to go with you when convenient to yourself.'

'That is just what I wished,' said Mr. Cadwallador. 'You shall go in at the door I showed you, Pansy,

and tell us what comparison there is between our subterranean vaults and the Thames Tunnel.'

'And Mr. Arkwright will come to tea when you come up, will you not?' added Mrs. Cadwallador tc that gentleman.

'Thanks, I will. Good evening.'





CHAPTER V.

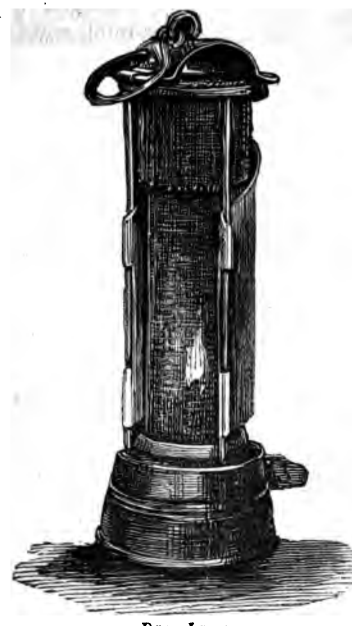
THE UNDERGROUND JOURNEY OF MR. AND MRS. OSBOURN.

**'Beneath the cheerful face of earth,
A hundred fathoms deep.'**

THE next day, according to previous arrangement, our friends find themselves in Mr. Arkwright's office, ready for the descent into the mine. Pansy is carefully wrapped in a waterproof cloak, has strong boots on, and her hair is covered with a large handkerchief, which meets and is tied beneath her chin. Harry's nice gray office-suit not being quite the right sort of thing to wear on such an excursion as the present, he has wisely borrowed from his uncle an outfit that had done duty for the same journey before. So here is our young City clerk in a costume sadly too wide in the waist, too short in the sleeves, and reaching to within an inch of the top of his boots. Some of the workmen looked on with admiration, and said, 'That for a town chap he was very sensible; it would have been a shame to go down the pit in them nice *togs* he had on yesterday.'

'You should have a hat on,' said a good-natured collier to Pansy; 'you may hurt your head. Put

this on, Mum.' And he took off his own dirty, battered wide-awake.



Davy Lamp.

The young lady could not be offended, although of course she declined to use the doubtful-looking head-piece.

'No, thank you,' she said; 'it is too big for me; I shall lose it.'

The same man presently placed a 'Davy' lamp in her hand.

'What must I do with this?' she asked. 'I don't understand anything about it.'

'You must carry it,' he told her; 'that's all you must do with it. You will want a bit of light, you know, when you are down.'

'Is it very dark, then?' asked Mrs. Osbourn, with a rather dismayed look.

'Well, yes, it is rather dark,' replied the man, turning to his fellow-workmen with a comical look on his sooty face.

The manager has his case of instruments ready; the under-viewer has the supports of the 'Dial' in his hands; each man has his lamp; and all is ready.

'Try the rope,' says Mr. Arkwright to one of

them. The man at the engine is communicated with, and the rope runs up and down the shaft, bearing its iron-bound cage easily and smoothly.

'That will do,' he remarks, and steps into the ungainly-looking vehicle.

'Now, Mrs. Osbourn, come on, please; never mind your husband; he will take care of himself.' This he said, for Pansy's wistful eyes were turned to where Harry stood. 'Just here; and allow me to hold your hands. That is it!' he added, placing her in the middle of the cage, where she would be more at ease than at the side.

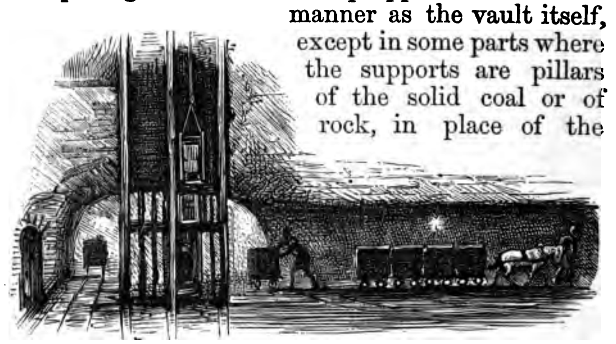
During the brief time it took to arrange their position, Pansy's heart misgave her terribly. Suppose, she thought, the rope should break; or suppose one of the links in the chain that held them should snap; or suppose the bottom of the cage should fall out, and let them all through; or suppose the wheel at the top should stick fast, and they should be hanging in the middle of that dark hole; or suppose—— But these awful suppositions were driven into something like real terror when she heard the words, 'Off we go,' from some of the workmen.

'Pray don't be alarmed,' said Mr. Arkwright, as she started and tightened her hold on the manager's hands.

'How damp it is!' she gasped; 'and how dark! And, O dear! I don't know whether I am going up or down! O, it is awful!' But whatever else she might have fancied, was not stated; for the perilous journey is accomplished, and they are at the bottom of the long, dark entrance to the mine. Practically the door is closed for the time; for in a moment, the place they had vacated is filled with loaded trucks, and the cage is making its dreary, monotonous

journey up the dismal tunnel before they well know they are in safety.

As soon as their eyes become accustomed to the gloom of the 'dreary region,' which is only lighted by the faint glimmer of the miners' lamps, they find themselves in a vault some seven or eight feet high, whose roof is well supported by 'props' of stout timber on each side and across the centre. All round are openings, like doorways, in the sides of this vault. These are the passages to the more distant parts of the pit, and lead to various seams, roads, or galleries where the mineral is to be found. Both the openings and roads are propped in the same manner as the vault itself, except in some parts where the supports are pillars of the solid coal or of rock, in place of the



timber prop more commonly used. Lines or tramways run into each of these recesses; and the small wagons which have just gone up, as well as the many others to be seen about them, are run on these rails from the recesses above mentioned.

A man appointed for the purpose now takes each lamp, and examines it carefully, to be sure of its being safely locked, before they are allowed to penetrate further into the mine. Pansy has just taken back her lamp from the man's hand, when she is startled by the snorting of a horse close beside her. Although

she was not previously aware of its presence, she now by the aid of her lamp sees that it is harnessed to a train of coal-wagons that appear to have just emerged from one of the doorways. At once she sees *why* it is there. But how did it get there?

Mr. Arkwright informs her that when a horse has to be brought into the mine, a strong box, as high as the animal itself, is brought to the top of the pit, and attached to the rope in the same manner as the ordinary cage they had come down in; that it is made fast with the usual catches; and one side of the box is unbolted, and opened like a door; that the horse then, by rough or gentle measures, as the case may require, is induced to enter; in a moment its head is secured by a chain, and the man in charge stands close to the shoulder of the frightened creature, where he knows it cannot harm him should it kick or plunge; then the journey is so soon done, that before it can recover from its bewilderment, it is at the bottom, and released from its close quarters. When animals are taken up, the process is the same.

'Is there more than one horse down here?'

'Yes, we have several; I will show you the stables before we go further.'

Lighted as before with the 'Davy,' they enter the 'horses' quarters,' and find that they are cut out of the solid sides of the mine. After a moment spent here, Mr. Arkwright turns to the spot where his men are waiting to assist him in his surveying.

'How do you get such good air?' Mr. Osbourn enquires, as they pass on; 'you seem to have capital ventilation, somehow or other.'

'Yes,' said the manager, 'that is one thing we cannot do without. And herein is one of the many wonders of a wonder-working God, Who fills every road and way with air. Of course, we all under-

stand the peculiar property the atmosphere has of pressing itself into every place where there is the least opening. We have only to sit by a badly-fitting door or window to feel what we call a "draught," but what is really the pure fresh air going on its mission of mercy. You mentioned the strong draught as we descended the mine. That is the life of the place; the Almighty has so made provision that, with a little work on our part, this glorious stream presses down the shaft in such vast quantities as to keep pure and fit for breathing even the air of such a place as this. It drives all noxious vapours and foul gases before it (except, I ought to say, in very exceptional cases), and clears them away.'

'Very wonderful,' said Harry, 'very! What then becomes of the air which we must suppose becomes in some measure impure in its journey through the passages you mention?'

'I will show you,' said Mr. Arkwright. 'The shaft down which we came is called the *Downcast.* You will understand why. At some distance there is another called the *Upcast.* At a short distance from the bottom of this is a large fire. When the fresh air has gone its round of the entire workings, which it does by means of gates, air-ways, and traps, returning by another way, it reaches the Upcast shaft. Here we are just at the furnace. See how the



Ventilating Furnace.

fire roars and tears up the chimney, which leads into the shaft. Now, it is easy to see how the strong current, created by this fire, and the aids I have before mentioned, draw the "return" air into its own course, which, you see, is at a perfectly safe distance from the fire, and so facilitate its escape. This is going on every instant, and the mine is preserved in health.'

'I see exactly,' Harry remarked; 'but are you not afraid of the mine taking fire from this immense furnace? It seems to me that it might ignite at any moment.'

'No, that cannot be; because the spaces between the arches that you see over the furnace are filled with fresh air from the Downcast shaft. This cools the walls of the arches themselves, and also the walls of coal on the outer sides. This pure, cold air, passing through, enters and feeds the fire in the furnace, going through with safety, because free from gas.'

'You must have had clever and skilful men in the construction of the mine.'

'Without doubt, Mr. Osbourn; a very clever Mining Engineer planned it all. We must not delay,' he added, 'or we shall not do much. Mrs. Osbourn, you had better ride to where I have to take some surveys.'

'Ride! O no!' said Pansy; 'I was never on horseback in my life; I should not like to try!'

'No, not on horseback, certainly! If you were ever so good a rider, you could not manage it here. I mean in one of the wagons.'

Mrs. Osbourn looks at the dirty wagon and demurs; but when a man is seen to place a quantity of clean straw in the rude carriage, she consents to the arrangement, wondering a little what her city friends

would say, could they only see her just then. She is, however, very thankful that she has not insisted upon walking, when she finds what a long distance it is to the place where the manager is required, and, as she often tells herself, what horrid, not to say fearful roads they have to travel.





CHAPTER VI.

MRS. OSBOURN TRIES HER 'PRENTICE HAND' AT A SHOT.

'A woman is no less a woman for knowing how hardly earned is the money her husband brings to her.'

AT length our friends reach a comparatively open space, where the under-viewer is already stationed, with the instruments which Mr. Arkwright had entrusted to him. Pansy is lifted from her not very luxurious carriage, and, with her husband, seats herself upon some coal, while the process of 'taking a sight' is going on. They are laughing merrily at the grotesque appearance they make, when they are somewhat alarmed by the sight of the assistant, who, with vigorous blows, is driving a hook into the roof of the little vault, and they only breathe freely when the lamp he intends to suspend to it, hangs safely above. At this moment the under-viewer comes to Mrs. Osbourn and enquires, 'Have you any keys about you?'

'No, they had nothing that would disturb the needle,' they say; and the man is going back to his post, when he makes a sudden turn, and again speaking to Mrs. Osbourn, says, 'You have a brass thing fastening your cloak, ma'am.'

'I am sure I have not,' she cried sharply; 'you are quite mistaken, I assure you.'

Laughing loudly, Harry tells him, 'It's gold, my man!'

'Is it?' said the man, with a doubtful look. 'Well, it's the likest thing to brass as ever I see!'

On speaking of this afterwards, Pansy indignantly said, 'Brass, indeed! When it was the gold brooch that Harry gave me on my wedding-day. I only wore it because the pin was so strong.'

The surveying in that particular place is finished, and a move is to be made further into the awful caverns, in one of which they are told there is a shot to be fired.

'Would you like to fire it, Mrs. Osbourn?'

'What does it mean, Mr. Arkwright?' she asked.

'Come here, Mrs. Osbourn. I will tell you. This, you see, is a compact piece of mineral, which cannot be got away easily, if at all, by aid of the pick. But the man, you see, has bored a deep hole just here. Into this he has put a cartridge, and here, you see, is a train to the place inside this long tube, which is called a "fusee," and which, like the hole, is filled with powder. If a light be applied to the end nearest you, the fire will run slowly up the tube, and ignite the powder in the cartridge; and by the force of the explosion the coal for some distance all round will be disturbed from its place. Will you try it?'

'Don't, if you are at all afraid,' said her husband.

'But I am not, Harry, thank you.'

Mr. Arkwright smiled sadly as he said: 'But the deadly enemy who lurks in holes and corners is ready at all times, where there is the least careless-

ness, to leap out amongst us. This spark,' lifting a match, 'in certain conditions of a mine, would be sufficient to ruin a colliery, and kill every man in it. Don't be alarmed; we are quite safe here. We are, as you have seen, well ventilated, and I hope, by God's blessing, and using all proper care, we shall always continue to be so. Give the lady the light, Jemmy. As soon as you have applied it, Mrs. Osbourn, come quickly this way out of the dust which is sure to follow the shot.'

Pansy applied the match; Mr. Arkwright caught her hand, and ran back a short distance. Then followed a noise like the loudest thunder, which seemed to last for some minutes, and which alarmed Pansy not a little. Then they retraced their steps to where the shot had been fired, and where there was a strong smell of powder and a good deal of dust and smoke, arising from the explosion which Pansy's match had caused.

'That is what alarmed you so much, Mrs. Osbourn,' said the manager. 'It is your own work. You have displaced about three tons of coal.'

'Why, Pansy,' said her husband, 'you are a veritable Samson!'

At a short distance a man is labouring hard with his pick, and apparently making small advance, for the seam is rather hard. As the party passes, Mr. Arkwright stops a moment to give some order to him. They see the perspiration running down his face.

'That is hard work,' says Harry to the weary-looking miner.

'Yes, Sir, it's hard enough. Would your "Missis" like to try a blow or two? Ladies as comes, often does, just to say they did.'

'I should really like it, if I can,' said the 'Missis.'

'Come along, Mrs. Osbourn, here is your pick,' said Mr. Arkwright.

Pansy took the heavy implement up, 'like a man would,' the miner told her husband; and after one or two ineffectual attempts, she at length succeeded in chipping off a bit of coal some three or four inches in thickness.

'There!' cried the man. 'Well done! Won't you try, Sir?'

Taking up the pick his wife had just thrown aside, Harry made a vigorous lunge at the solid wall, which same blow sent such a shock to his head as caused him at once to throw the tool aside, saying, 'A quill is more in my way than a pick.'

If any of my readers should peep into Mrs. Osbourn's little drawing-room, they would probably notice among some fossils under a glass shade, the bit of coal she cut in the Llanroth mine, with the date written on a label and gummed to the precious relic.

A conversation is here commenced on the dangers with which the colliers are at all times surrounded, in which conversation one or two of the men join, giving their opinions in a clear, if quaint, manner. Gases, with their deadly influence; Faults, with their consequent annoyances and losses; perils from falling roofs and from inundation, are freely discussed.

'I have heard of pits being drowned,' said Harry. 'But where can the water come from?'

'From above us, below us, and around us,' said the manager.

'Ay, Sir,' said the man called Jemmy, 'if this mine were not properly surveyed and great care taken that the men kept in their places and went so far and no further, one collier might drown the mine

out. There's many a colliery been drowned through a few blows of the pick. The water will run in like a river; it has done, as I know only too well.'

'Jemmy has been in a pit that was flooded out through such a trifling thing as he has mentioned. Eh, Jemmy?'

'I just have, Sir! Before we knew where we were, the water fairly swept us off our legs. Many of the men were drowned, but I was a good swimmer, and kept going, though it was so dark, towards the pit's eye. I touched many a dead thing before I reached it, but whether men or horses I never knew, for many of both were floating about, as was afterwards discovered. I was all but gone, when I was saved by those on the higher ground.'

'Water has always to be guarded against,' said Mr. Arkwright. 'Jemmy is an old miner; he knows its danger. We have now at work a pump that raises from this apparently safe mine from three to four hundred gallons of water each minute.'





CHAPTER VII.

THE RETURN JOURNEY.

'Out of shadow into sunlight,
Out of darkness into day.'

THE road by which our party will return is wet and rugged, worse even than the one by which they entered. The sights, however, with which they meet, make them forget their own discomforts in pity for others.

'Step aside for a moment,' said Mr. Arkwright, 'and look at the way in which these poor men are compelled to work.'

Here in a dismal recess are several men, nude to the waist. One is on his knees, and as he works he sings,

'Cheer, boys, cheer!
There's wealth for honest labour!'

Others are lying on their sides, their backs towards the visitors; and in this painful position, with well-appointed blows, they bring down the coal, which is gathered together by another set of men, whose duty it is to receive it from the hewers, load the wagons, and send them to the bottom of the shaft. One man rolls himself over to look at the strange faces beside him. The whites of his eyes and his teeth gleam so strangely in the light of the 'Davy,'

as to startle them; whilst, apparently unconcerned, he rolls himself back to his former position, and begins to cut away as before.



'This is fearful,' said Mrs. Osbourn. 'How do the poor fellows breathe?'

'With difficulty, no doubt. Well, what is it, John?' said Mr. Arkwright, in reply to a call of 'Gaffer,' from one of the men. 'A fault? Yes. You know there is something awkward about here: it is part of the old slip.' After thinking for a moment, he added to one of the overmen, 'Put John to another place for a bit, till I see what will be best. If we cannot do anything else, we must blast. Move the gang. They won't earn their salt here.'

These sights and sounds are repeated as they pass on. Poor little boys are found in various places where the doors or gates are situated, crouched by themselves in the dark, gloomy passages, their sole occupation being to open or shut the doors as the trams require to pass.

'Are these children by themselves?' asked Pansy, pitifully.

'Yes, they sit there quite alone, but for the occasional presence of passers-by. Poor little chaps! I am so sorry for them! Sometimes the bigger boys frighten them with stories of goblins and fairies that they say *they know* are in the mine; or of men and lads that have been lost and never found again; and the poor little things are sometimes afraid to stir. One of them told me that he scarcely ever opened his eyes for fear of *seeing something*. Then, the men are, as a rule, cruel to the boys, and for a *lark*, as they say, leave them behind when they finish work for the day.'

'There is some one else singing: how strange it seems in the dark.'

'That is a pony-driver,' said Jemmy; 'he goes to a singing-class. He is mighty fond of "Rule, Britannia."'

And surely enough the lad came on in the dark, dismal tunnel, whipping his pony and swinging his lamp as he sang, 'Britons never shall be slaves!' It was impossible to do otherwise than laugh at the boy, and wonder what his idea of slavery could be.

'Be good enough to stoop here,' said the manager, 'it is rather low.'

There was no mistake about its being low; from the muddy floor to the top was scarcely four feet. Still they go forward, until the manager is heard to say, 'Look out,' and would have added, 'it is very wet here. But poor Pansy, who was much exhausted, hailed the words *look out*, as meaning *look up* And so she did, or rather so she *attempted* to do; for as she lifted her head, it came in such violent contact with the low roof as to send her down on her knees in the black mud of which Mr. Arkwright would have warned her.

'Dear heart alive!' said Jemmy; 'I wish you had taken my hat.'

'Thank you,' said Pansy, with a funny little laugh, 'I am not much hurt.'

Her hands and dress of course were a sad sight, but Harry's handkerchief took away the worst of the clinging mire, and after a moment's rest they proceed on the homeward journey.

'I shall have the bump of benevolence well developed after this, Harry,' she said. 'I shall have stronger sympathy with the poor men who almost spend their lives in this awful place.'

'You may say that, Ma'am,' said one of the men; 'some of us do nearly live here. In the winter, when the days are short, many of us never see daylight for a week at a time. You may not think of it, but when you are sitting in your comfortable houses, there are thousands of men like us, in the bowels of the earth, working to get the coals that keep you warm.'

'I am sorry to say,' said Mr. Osbourn, 'that we knew little or nothing before this time about a colliery. Indeed, my wife never saw one until we came here.'

'Indeed, Ma'am,' said the workman, respectfully; 'now you do know, I hope you will not forget to pray for us, that we may be kept from danger and from sudden death, for ours is a dangerous calling.'

They have now reached a more open place, where there is standing room, and where they breathe more freely. Mr. Arkwright tells Pansy that now she shall go forward in a coal-wagon.

'Thank you,' she replied; 'I shall be glad, for I am so tired, and I cannot be much dirtier wherever I go. Your face is quite black, Harry. I hope I have not touched mine with my dirty hands; have I?'

The boy who had charge of the wagon, upon this burst into such a hearty laugh that, as Pansy afterwards said, he seemed to have swallowed himself, and that nothing was left of him but his mouth. At this rude outburst, however, she did not wonder when she saw her reflection in the dressing-glass. The most complete 'Tattoo,' was nothing to the fantastic pattern drawn on Pansy Osbourn's pretty face by the dust and the heat combined.

The way back is accomplished pretty satisfactorily. Once she did not crouch low enough, and so got another bump; and once when the wagon gave a lurch, she put out her hand to steady it, when a jagged piece of coal or slate caught and tore her sadly-dilapidated and dirty glove from her hand, and grazed her knuckles considerably. At length they reached the bottom of the shaft, and, with the manager, are soon on their way back to earth, where they wink and shade their eyes, just as they had the day before seen the workmen do.

'Harry dear,' said Pansy, soberly, 'I had no idea that the colliers lived and worked like that. I never dreamed that there could be such dangers and such hardships.'

And indeed, my good reader, I fear there are many like Mrs. Osbourn in this, for how true it is that one half the world knows not how the other half lives.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE MANAGER'S STORY

'My Father's arm is round me cast,
And if the way seems rough, I only clasp
The Hand that leads me with a firmer grasp.'

BEFORE the afternoon was much further advanced, our friends, no longer coal- and soil-stained, were awaiting tea in Mr. Cadwallador's pleasant home. If the readers of this story have never taken tea in one of the homes of the 'well-to-do' about here, let them just look in with me for a moment.

A good-sized table is in the middle of the room, covered with snowy damask; faultless china, bright knives, silver forks and spoons, are laid in order on its white surface. A very handsome service of silver, with an inscription on one of the larger articles, tells you that it is a present from the workmen of the Llanroth Colliery to 'Mr. John Cadwallador, as a mark of their esteem.' China plates filled with bread and butter, are seen on the table, together with a fresh brown loaf and a white one. In a pretty glass dish float pieces of bright golden butter. A white china bowl is filled with crisp lettuce, radishes, and cress. There is a basket with boiled eggs in it; a cold leg of lamb, with plenty of green parsley round it; a dish of broiled

ham, with delicately poached eggs dropped like snowballs on each slice; and some trout, caught that day, fried in bread-crumbs, and served on a fair white napkin. Cream? Yes! and not London cream either! but such as you might lift with a fork! That is the kind of meal good Mrs. Cadwallador likes to set before her guests, and is 'High Tea,' without doubt. 'But these children,' she says, 'have had no dinner, and must be nearly famished.' Hearing the click of the garden gate, she says, 'Here is Mr. Arkwright; I wish I had thought to tell him to bring his wife; she is such a good little woman.'

'I am very glad you think so, Mrs. Cadwallador,' said a cheery voice; 'because then I hope you will not think I have taken a liberty in coming without an invitation.'

This is the manager's wife who speaks, and who seems quite at home.

'I am very glad, my dear, that you had the good sense to come without ceremony. You and Mrs. Osbourn will be good friends.'

'I don't think Tom would have been happy without me,' said Mrs. Arkwright, with a sly look at her husband; 'so I left baby with mother. And there is another thing. My Tom told me such a lot of nice things about you, Mrs. Osbourn, that I don't think that I could have gone to sleep to-night if I had not seen you!'

'Does she, then, come up to your expectations?' said Mr. Osbourn, good-humouredly, while Pansy laughed and blushed.

'I cannot give an opinion until you have stayed with us a day or two, Mr. Osbourn; and that reminds me to ask you if you will do us the favour of coming, Mrs. Osbourn, if Mrs. Cadwallador will

kindly spare you. She is such a good friend that she never refuses me anything I ask for.'

'I am going to be ill-natured, then, Nellie,' said Mrs. Cadwallador. 'I can only lend them to you for one or two afternoons, and then you must take us as well.'

Nellie's face fell a little, but in a moment her old gay manner returned.

'Well,' she said, 'if you will only do that, we shall be very glad to have you for the short time you mention: all of you, of course. But dear Mrs. Osbourn will scarcely see what baby is like in the time; and he is such a little ——'

'Bravo, Nellie!' said her husband, laughing. 'The old theme—the blessed baby! Listen to me, Mr. Osbourn: I will tell you something known only to my wife and myself.' Affecting great secrecy, he said: 'My son Frank, aged just six months, is the best, finest, prettiest, nicest, blessedest, and "all the rest of it," baby in the world. His mother says so, and she is sure to know, for he is scarcely ever out of her arms.'

'What a shame to speak of——. I mean, what a shame to make fun of the little darling, Tom. You are as fond of him as possible yourself.'

'I shall come and see him, Mrs. Arkwright, for myself. I am sure he is all you think, despite his papa's "nonsense,"' said Pansy.

The entrance of the rosy-cheeked servant put an end to this jocular conversation, and while the table was cleared, a stroll was taken in the garden.

On their return to the house, a conversation is engaged in on the adventure of the day, and the various things mentioned by the man called Jemmy.

'What deadly peril the man was in,' said Harry.

'So are many of the men, often and often. Mr. Arkwright himself has had many narrow escapes. Show my nephew your hands, Tom, and tell him how you got those marks,' he said, addressing the manager.

The young man rose, crossed to where Harry sat, and showed him some deep scars of the same blue colour as those which Mr. Cadwallador had before shown to them.

'I got these ugly places,' he said, 'when for some few minutes, that seemed to me like years, my life hung on a thread. This one finger I shall never properly use again; the joint is injured; but that is little in comparison with what might have been. My poor Nellie remembers it well. Don't you, my dear?' he said, patting her head with a loving hand.

'Yes; it is a thing never to be forgotten,' she said gently.

'Well, it happened in this way,' he began. 'I had occasion to go down the pit unexpectedly, and so had to go home to change my dress, and tell my wife not to wait dinner, for I might be late. She came with me to the garden gate. I see her now as I saw her then, with our first baby in her arms. As I was leaving her, she lifted the child to be kissed, and lifted her own face —— Well, I won't tell that. Don't blush, my darling! She said, "Take care of yourself, Tom." "Yes, yes; for your sake, if for nothing else," I said to myself. I did what was required, and was very soon preparing to go up again. All was right; there was nothing to make me feel in any way uneasy. I got into the cage; it was similar to the one in which you went down to-day. I had my little dog in my arms, and thought how pleased Nellie would be to see me so

much sooner than she expected. Again I saw her as I left her, with the baby in her arms, at the garden gate, and I felt very happy.

'In an instant I felt a jerk, and almost before I had time to think, I found that I had been pitched out of the cage, and was falling down the shaft. The care of God, however, was not withdrawn. It appears to me that I turned quite round in the fall; and the next instant I had hold of one of the guide-rods in the side of the shaft. I had scarcely taken hold, when one of my men shot swiftly past me, as I even then knew, to certain death. As he passed, his thick boot caught my head, cutting it just here, where the white seam still bears evidence of the fearful force of the blow. It seemed I could do nothing myself, but must fall, too, when the face of Nellie at the garden gate, with our child, came before me, and I seemed to hear her say, "Take care of yourself, Tom!" The agony of that moment I can never tell, but I nerved myself for a fight for life. I wound my legs round the guide-rope, and holding by both hands, commenced to slide down. As I did so, the friction became fire under my hands, and my clothing was torn from my body. "Heaven help me!" I cried; "I cannot bear it longer! I must fall and end this agony!" Again Nellie's face and the dear child were before me, and the words, "Take care," came back to me. And now I commended myself to God, and prayed, for my wife's and child's sake, "Spare me, O my Father!" I again began to slide to where I hoped I could fall without fear of being dashed to pieces. Several of the men, with their lamps, had gathered at the bottom of the shaft when they heard the fall of the other poor fellow. Of course he was quite dead, and it was said at the inquest that every bone in

his body was broken. A wife and *nine* children waited in vain for his return.

'As for myself, when I succeeded in reaching the bottom, all that could be done was done. The men carried me to the fire, and took the oil from their lamps to pour over my terrible wounds. My hands were injured, as you see; my legs torn, my shoulders cut, the hurt on my head was bleeding, and I was sick, faint, and, as it seemed to me, ready to die; but again the face of Nellie and the child, lifting its little mouth to be kissed, came before me, and I wept like a child, and blessed God that I had been spared for their sake; and I felt in that awful moment that God had something for me to do. I have since found it to be so, and bless Him for it.'

'What a fearful experience!' said Mrs. Osbourn. 'Was any one else killed, besides the poor fellow you mention?'

'No: that was another marvel. A third man was thrown out at the same time, but he caught the side of the cage, and drew himself in again, and so escaped with a few bruises. The dog seems to have remained in the cage, and, as you may suppose, became a great favourite.'

'What was the cause of such a terrible accident, Mr. Arkwright?'

'There was something wrong with the machinery, and it was three hours before help could come to me. When, however, it did come, I was taken home, and my wife—who, of course, had been told, and was anxiously awaiting my return—met me at the gate, and kissed my blood-stained face, quiet and composed as ever she was. "I shall come in," she said, when some of them would have kept her back and not allowed her to follow me to my room.

"Let her alone," said the doctor. "Come in, Mrs. Arkwright, I shall require you." She never shed a tear in my sight, but held me while my hurts were seen to, and cut away the hair from my head that the wound might be dressed. She never faltered. If I was at all impatient (as I dare say I was, for I suffered sadly), she would say, "Try to bear it, Tom, for baby's sake."'

'Dear Mrs. Arkwright,' asked Pansy, in a tearful voice, 'how could you bear it? How did you bear it?'

'Why, if I had not done my very best, and my husband had died, how dreadful it would have been. Then there was the poor baby. If its father had been taken, I must have been both father and mother to it. So I prayed earnestly that God would support me, and give me grace to submit to His holy will, whatever it might be. The very saddest thing was to see him suffer so much. Poor fellow! he could not at times even smile at the baby.'

'How dreadfully you must all have suffered,' said Harry. 'Were you very long in getting well?'

'Very many weeks. It was a question at one time whether I should not lose my hand; but under the care of a skilful doctor and the excellent nursing I had from my wife and her friends, I was in time restored, and able to resume my work.'

'Were you not afraid to go down the pit, after this?'

'I think I was for a time, but I got over it all right, and now I am really not afraid to go to my work, fully believing that "all things work together for good to them that love God."'

'How thankful I am,' said Mrs. Osbourn, 'that I

am not called upon to see such sad sights. I am so unfit for anything of the sort.'

'I do not think you are unfit, Mrs. Osbourn. Still, I hope you may not be tried in such a way.'

Nevertheless, before the young couple left the valley of Llanroth, they were called upon to witness a spectacle that filled the valley with mourning and brought desolation and woe to many homes.





CHAPTER IX.

STRIKES.

'Let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth o'er a' the earth
May bear the grea', and a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that;
That man to man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!'—BURNS.

ACCORDING to previous arrangement, one bright afternoon saw Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallador with their guests seated in Mrs. Arkwright's pretty home. Beautiful as homes can be made by woman's hand, this seemed to surpass any that Mrs. Osbourn had yet seen. Statuettes under glass shades were placed on the chimney-piece or on brackets; flowers gleamed from clear-cut vases; books were found in almost every part of the room, some hung on queer little shelves in the corners of the parlour, others were secured by slides; some steel engravings were suspended from the walls; light lace curtains covered the window-frame without keeping out the gentle breeze. The furniture was covered with chintz of a pale colour that had in it a small running pattern of

blue; one or two easy-chairs had soft cushions for the head and shoulders, and more of these comfortable additions to a sitting-room were on the old-fashioned sofa. One thing took Pansy's attention at once, a white plaster model of a Grecian pillar about a foot and a-half high. Its capital was beautifully carved; the base was placed in a shallow tray with some damp sand in it, over which was spread a thick covering of natural moss; on its emerald bosom were placed a large number of buds and blossoms of the white sweet-scented violet, whose fragrance filled the room. From the base to the capital the little pillar was wreathed with small-leaved wild ivy. It was a lovely ornament; 'and had the merit,' says Nellie, 'of being inexpensive.' She gave two shillings for the pillar to a travelling Italian boy. The flowers, of course, were from their own garden, and could be replaced at any time. This took its place among other pretty things, chiefly the work of Mrs. Arkwright's 'deft' fingers; and altogether they formed as charming a room as any tired husband need rest in when the labour of the day is done. Soon Nelly herself came in carrying 'baby' in her arms.

Mrs. Arkwright is a true mother, and has a mother's pride in the fair child who, with blue sash and shoulder-knots, hides his curly head on his mother's breast, and kicks with his little blue-shod feet.

'What a little darling!' Pansy cried, in delight; 'let me have him, please, Mrs. Arkwright.'

But baby is coy and pretends not to hear, and tries to get further over his mother's shoulder.

'Come to me, Frank,' says Mrs. Cadwallador; 'come!'

The young gentleman is cautious still; but he takes his fingers from his mouth, and gives a side look at Pansy, as if he thought he ought to go to her, she having asked him first. The sight of a 'sweet,' however, in the hand of Mrs. Cadwallador settles the question at once, and the dimpled arms are extended to that lady. Let it not be supposed that Franky was a model baby, that sat still all day and slept all night. That one 'sweet' brought to his recollection a certain pocket where 'sweets' were kept for his delectation. That was the secret of his love for Mrs. Cadwallador.

Well, now Pansy has seen the 'blessed baby!' And she has so admired its dear little face, hands, feet and curls, as to make Nellie Arkwright the proudest mother in Wales. He is induced to allow Pansy to kiss his damp little mouth, to kiss his own hand in baby fashion, and to say 'ta, ta!' and is dismissed for the night, though his watchful mother makes frequent journeys upstairs to see that all is right with the children.

'Do not forget that you promised to give me some information about strikes, Mr. Arkwright,' said Harry.

'Ay! indeed,' said Mr. Cadwallador, without waiting for the manager's reply, 'you ought to know the trouble there is in supplying you with your bright fires.'

'I agree with you, uncle, that we ought to know. Of the trouble of getting I have seen a little; but it appears to me that there are other and very serious difficulties not understood by outsiders. Strikes are, I suppose, serious hindrances

to the prosperity of the whole concern. Have you any such trouble here?'

'Plenty, I assure you!' said the manager, although he laughed as he said it. 'There is generally some little matter on hand. You see, we are a large number altogether; and although we have as good and sensible fellows with us as are to be found anywhere, yet we have also the "black sheep" who are to be found in any large establishment, and very bad they are to manage.'

'What was the matter yesterday morning? I heard some of the men speak of a dispute.'

'O, just the old story of *light*, Mr. Cadwallador. You know they don't like the Davy lamp. I had better tell you it: it is sufficiently ridiculous. Of course, Mr. Osbourn, you understand we have to insist on the lamp being used; the safety of the mine in a great measure depends upon it. Early yesterday the underlooker came in a great hurry to tell me that some of the men had refused to work by the "Davy" any longer. Rather alarmed, I hastened to the pit-bank. There were several men standing together conversing in a rather angry manner. I heard that Jemmy was in bad odour with them, and at once guessed that they knew he had been to me.

'"What is this about the lamps?" I asked. "Who says they are not going to use them?"

'One answers for the rest. "We don't mean to have the Davy any longer; we can't see to work by the light they give."

'"But you must comply with the rules of the colliery," said I; "you know a naked light is forbidden."

'"We don't care," said twenty at once; "we

don't care for the colliery rules, nor for you either!"

'"If you do not care for me you had better care for yourselves," I told them quietly; "you know, as well as I do, if there is the least gas afloat, you might all be blown to atoms in a moment."

'"There is no gas, and you know it," said one surly fellow. "There isn't a freer place in Wales."

'"No!" cried another; "that is not your reason. The reason is this; the market is down, and you have a lot of coal stacked. You're afraid of us getting too much up. I say that is the reason."

'He is supported in this by sundry growls of "To be sure it is," and "That's it."

'"Don't say that, Will; because you know it is not true. I don't want you to be killed, as you may be. As for your saying there is no gas, you are all colliers enough to know that it may come from any corner where you least expect it. However, once for all, I will not allow the naked lights to be used. You shall not risk your own lives nor your masters' property."

'"Ay, that's it! The masters, not the men! you always did go in for the masters."

'I waited quietly, hoping they would go down without any further trouble. I get a good many hard things said to me and at me, more than I believe I am entitled to.

'They were dogged and sullen, but seemed determined to beat me, and one sprang forward to get into the cage that hangs over the pit.

'"Stop!" said I. "Not a man goes down without his lamp, and that lamp locked!"

'"Then we won't work," said some of them.

'"Who will be the loser?" I asked. "One of

you said we have plenty of coal stacked; the market is low, as you have said, and we have nothing very urgent on hand. We can let you play, if you wish; but we don't *want* you to do so. Your work is before you, if you like to go on as before."

'"We don't want to play; we want to work, but you won't let us have light to work by," said the same man who had just spoken.

'"Take your lamps and go down, then," I said. "That is the only light you will have. You that are willing had better lose no more time. You that are not, had better come into the office and take what you have to draw; and you need not return here."

'Sullenly some of them went forward and were taken down. Some twenty, however, remained standing there. I could hear threats and oaths against myself. One said he would pitch me down the shaft; others that they would give me a ducking in the pool. I knew they would not do so; I had too many about me that were friendly to me.

'"Are you going down?" I asked; "or are you waiting to take your money?"

'They talked together a moment, then some went towards the pit.

'"We shall remember this, gaffer!" said one, as they went forward.

'"I hope you will," I said, ignoring their meaning; "and remember, I am acting for your own good. What good in the world can it be to me if some half-dozen of you were brought up dead or crippled for life, or struck blind as Charlie Carr was? You know we are all worth something to somebody. A few of you have wives and

little children. If you are the men I take you for, you think as much of them as I do of mine; and that's a good deal, I can tell you. Why, for their sakes I would not risk my life unnecessarily, as you were going to do."

'I saw the features of some of them soften; one or two of them laughed quietly, so I knew they were coming to. I knew one young man had been married only about a month. I looked at him and said, "Dick, you would not like to leave your wife a widow, would you?"

'"No, Sir, I would not," he said; and in a moment he went to the shaft, lamp in hand.

'"I hear," I said to another, "that a new baby came to your house a week ago."

'"Ay!" said he readily, with a satisfied smile; "there did, as pretty a little wench as ever you see." And he, too, stepped forward.

'"Come on, chaps!" said another; "the gaffer knows the weak spots."

'There was a good deal of laughing amongst them in a minute. All except the surly man were at once amiable.

'"You think a lot of your 'missis,' gaffer," said one, laughing.

'"He thinks no more of his than I do of mine," said the surly old fellow.

'"O!" said the young married man, "then that is the reason you gave her the black eye she had last week, so that you may know her again if you should lose her."

'"Here, my young bird," said the man, savagely and in a sneering tone, "don't crow too soon. You're only just tied; you may have to thrash *your* wife yet, much as you think of her. You don't know how provoking women can be"

'"If ever I lift my hand against my wife," said the young man, "I hope every honest man will avoid me as they would a mad dog."

'Before there was time for further retort, the cage returned for a fresh batch, and they were all down in a twinkling.'

'Are you not afraid of them,' asked Pansy, 'when they say and do such things?'

'No; they would not hurt me. I am sure their bark is worse than their bite. They are very good men on the whole; but there are always little things cropping up; and I am sorry to say there is not a good feeling between the masters and men just now. There is mistrust and dissatisfaction where there ought to be honourable confidence.'





CHAPTER X.

MORE ABOUT STRIKES.

> **'O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,**
> **Some boundless contiguity of shade,**
> **Where rumour of oppression and deceit,**
> **Of unsuccessful or successful war,**
> **Might never reach me more.'—COWPER.**

'CAN the dissatisfaction you mention be accounted for, Mr. Arkwright?'

'In some measure. But one difficulty arises out of another in such a way as makes the affair hard to explain and to understand, unless you are well acquainted with the circumstances of the place and the condition both of masters and men.'

'Years ago,' continued Mr. Arkwright, 'collieries made a vast amount of money. Fortunes were amassed in a few years. At that time men without doubt were well paid, for it could easily be afforded. Those were the palmy days of employer and employed. Naturally other men seeing what there was to be made in this branch of business, began to open out collieries wherever there was the least possibility of coal being found. As a consequence very large quantities of it were brought into the market. If trade is good, and large works are kept going, and the exports are pretty

good, the quantity does not much affect the general trade. But of late years one very important branch of the nation's commerce, I mean the iron trade, has been very low. Others besides colliers have been affected by this, and suffer in the same way. Depression and low prices are inevitable, and must be met as best they may. This is the time that all colliery owners have to fear. Their works are opened out; immense sums of money have been laid out in their construction; and very often this is borrowed money, for which, in such a risky thing as a colliery, very heavy interest has to be paid. Servants of every grade (and you have seen they are various) have to be paid before one penny can go into the pockets of the owners. It should be remembered that the expenses and the wear and tear of everything go on hourly. Persons in my position are urged to *sell*, to bring in the funds necessary for the conduct of the works. We find competition is so great that in order to sell at all, and keep our place in the market, we must sell at reduced prices. This is disastrous to a firm not "paid up." At this point the owners find that they ought to pay less to the men who get the coal; they believe they are doing the best thing they can; and indeed it is the only thing open to them. Well, this is a critical moment. The men do not like it, you may be sure; for the work is hard, and the lives of the workers are always more or less in danger. They complain and say hard things, which I think they would not say if they would consider the case. Then the owners get cross, sometimes very much so. That is not to be wondered at either; for they have put all they possess into the concern,

and ought in common justice to have a fair percentage on their money; but instead of that, at such times getting the coal is an entire loss.'

'I know that to be so,' Mr. Cadwallador remarked; 'I am acquainted with several gentlemen who have been obliged to close their works in order to save some small portion of their property. Others have tried to keep up, and worked at a dead loss, until they could hold out no longer; then the final "smash" came, and took all they had in the world.'

'That being the case,' Mr. Arkwright resumed, 'you see that the masters cannot give the wages they formerly did. It is really very hard for the men to have to do the same work for less wages, but it seems in such a case unavoidable; still, you cannot wonder that the men are discontented. At this crisis the "Union Agents" are busy; meetings are convened; the men gather in thousands round the well-fed, well-dressed, and well-paid men who talk to them of their *rights;* they listen to them as if they were their best and truest friends. They prepare their addresses to meet the chafed tempers of the men. Fond of strong figures, they rave about "a Free country," "The Constitution," "Free-born Britons," "The Charter," and compare the colliers themselves to negro slaves or Russian serfs, and bid them beware of the time when they will have to go about hungry, cold, and naked, while their *Masters*—the word being emphatically lengthened—roll by in luxurious carriages. At length the poor fellows begin to think that they really are slaves or serfs. "We will not stand it," they cry: "we are trodden down." "Don't stand it!" cries the orator. "We won't!" reply a hundred

voices. "Don't stand it. Be men! Strike! Bring the masters to your own terms." "We will we will strike!" And so they do.

'I once saw a gathering of this sort, at which by a show of hands it was decided to strike. The place shall be nameless. The Agent's name I don't remember. I know that he was a very handsome man, and could make the workmen think as he pleased with ease. If ever I was ashamed of my class, it was then. I was younger than I am now, or I should not have acted as I did. But listening until I grew vexed, I could not help speaking from the conveyance in which I sat: "Do let the men alone," I said; "they are honest and true. Let them attend to their own affairs. You came here uninvited. Go your way! Leave the men and the masters to themselves." "Ah!" he interrupted, and he pointed at me, "this is one of the masters' tools! This is one who would grind you to dust!" "Not a bit of it!" cried many of them at once; "we know him well. He is no master's man." "That I am not," I answered; "nor *men's man* either. I am where I wish to do right for my employers, and right for my fellow servants; for like you, I live by the work the masters give. I am younger than many of you, but I dare lift up my voice for your own sakes. Don't be talked over by a 'Union man.'"

'I saw that some of the men were thoughtful, and hoped they would go away quietly, when the Agent addressed me in a taunting tone. "Sir!" he said, "you speak of men's Unions. Have not the masters Unions as well as these men? Will you answer me that?" And he folded his arms across his breast. I told you he was a very

handsome man. As he stood towering above the rest, with a look of triumph upon his face, I wished I had his presence or power, and I devoutly wished he would use both in a better cause. I could only reply to his question, "I am sorry to say there is something of the kind; and I am sorry that the masters or men should find it needful, or fancy it is. But look at all these men; look at all that depends on them; and ask yourself what is to become of the women and the poor children if they strike? Things are bad; don't make them worse." "They want their rights, and their rights they must have," literally roared the speaker, stamping his foot. "Ay, that's it!" and in a moment all faces are turned to the *orator*. "You will get your rights," I said; "you will get something more than you deserve, if you listen to this man." But it was like trying to turn a river with a broomstick to speak to them. I did not catch the words the gentleman addressed to me as I drove away, but from the jeers of some of the men, I judge they were not at all complimentary. Many of the persons there I knew to be good common-sense men, capable of thinking and acting for themselves; yet they had so mixed themselves up with the Union that they were as useless as the others.'

'You don't like strikes, I see,' said Harry.

'You are quite right; for of all the huge follies of the age, I think a strike generally about the greatest. We live or should live by each other; but a strike prevents this, and instead of men being what they might be to each other, they are enemies.'

'I agree with Mr. Arkwright entirely,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'and shall hail the day when we have no more strikes. I would so say to any workman

and any master too, but the Unions think and act for them. I have seen in my time enough of strikes to make me hate the very name. Men allow themselves to be talked into a strike. Perhaps it will last for ten or more weeks; at the end of the time the poor fellows have to give in, and go to work at the old wages, poorer and more discontented than ever. I cannot but think the disputes would be more easily settled between the parties interested, than by Union representatives. Woe to the men if the Unions begin to fight! It is the men with wives and families that suffer. Surely men had better take twenty shillings where they had been accustomed to take forty, than see their wives and children famish, as is the case during a strike sometimes.'

'Famish!' said Pansy: 'famish!'

'Yes, indeed, my dear!' said Mrs. Cadwallador, 'that is so. *Famish* is the proper word to use. All of us about here know what nice decent women some of the colliers' wives are, how well they are dressed, and how nicely their little children are dressed when they are sent to school. But a strike alters this happy state of things. I have noticed as it lengthens out to weeks or months, how the women's bright shawls and nice linsey dresses are lost sight of; then the coats, and best hats or bonnets of the children go. Then the husband's Sunday suit, if he has one, goes. Brokers are seen going about, and chests of drawers, tall old-fashioned clocks, and even beds, are purchased and carried away. Ah! it is dreadful to see the shifts which some of the more respectable have to make to keep their goods about them. One strike which took place when we were living lower in the valley, was as bad as any. Don't you think so, John?'



A Collier's Home in good times.

'As bad as it well could be,' said Mr. Cadwallador.

'There was,' continued Mrs. Cadwallador, 'a very decent family living at a short distance from our house. The children were such well-behaved little things, that we noticed them a good deal. I saw that they had not been sent, as usual, into the field to play for several days past. I knew of course that they, as well as the rest of the people, were very poor; but fearing there might be something more than that the matter, I went down to their house. It was about twelve o'clock. On my going in, the mother and several little children were crouching round the fire; she was telling them a story about something or another, as I could see. "Excuse me a moment," she said, "we have been talking a bit while the potatoes boiled, and now they are done." She poured the water from the pan and soon had

the coveted meal on the table; she instantly gave the potatoes to the poor little things, who devoured them ravenously, keeping only one for herself. She had kept them all in bed, she told me, as long as ever she could; but they got so hungry that they all began to cry; and as she could not bear to hear them, she got up, and when she had made a bit of fire, she had to tell them stories while the potatoes boiled. "This is breakfast, then," I asked. "Yes, Ma'am, it's breakfast and dinner and tea," she said sadly. "But," said one of the children "some folks have no 'tatos; nor nothing, so mother says; and one woman one time was so hungry and poor, that she was going to kill her children, because there was nothing to eat; and we have some 'tatos, so we are best off." "And we have one a-piece at bed-time," said the woman, trying to look cheerful. "If they had a little milk!" I said. "Yes, *if!*" she said in reply; "but it is out of the question. But there is some soup to be given away the day after to-morrow, and I have a ticket for two quarts. It is very good, and thick with pease, so we put two quarts of water to it, and it lasts us a long time. I am to have a loaf, too; I am very thankful for it all." "What have you for to-morrow?" I asked. "I don't know, Ma'am; perhaps God may send us something." "Yes," chimed in another child; "birds can bring it, if God tells them; like they did to the man of God by that water. We can't go out to fetch anything, because all our things were sold to get money for father to take with him when he went away to get work." "Hush! hush!" said the mother; "don't talk; you do not know anything about it. Don't mind him, Ma'am; children will talk." "If you will come with me," I said, "I think I can find you something for to-mor-

row." Charging the little things to keep from the fire, she locked the house-door, lest any one should go in and talk of their bitter poverty to the children. I made her some tea very quickly, and gave her some bread and meat to eat while it was brewing. "May I take this home, please?" she begged. "No, not that," I told her. "I will give you something for the children when you have eaten what is before you. And now," I said, "drink this." And do you know, Pansy, when I put that cup of tea before her, she burst into tears and sobbed for very thankfulness. "I have not seen a cup for more than three weeks," she said. "And a cup of tea is such a comfort to a hard-working woman." Of course we did the best we could for them, and for as many others as possible: but it was all sad, sad work! The poor children used to come day after day round the garden gate, and wait to see if anything could be given to them. It would have made your heart ache to see them. One day I gave a lad, about fourteen years old, a large hot potato through the kitchen window. If it had been gold, I don't think it could have been more highly valued. He ran as fast as his weak legs could carry him to a quiet place to eat it, and when it was finished came to his playfellows boasting, "Ah! I've had a tato, I have! a whole hot 'un!"'





CHAPTER XI.

FURTHER RESULTS OF THE STRIKE.

'I dreamed of bread in my sleep, mother,
And the sight was heaven to see!
I awoke with an eager, famishing lip,
But you had no bread for me.'—EDWARDS.

MRS. CADWALLADOR went on to speak of the sad sights that were so common during the time of which they were conversing.

'I remember,' she said, 'one day coming across yonder field where you see the clump of firs. It is our own field, and not a public way. Just as I was passing the trees, I saw the bare feet of a child through the thick fern that was growing there. I went up to the place quietly, and saw that a little girl who sometimes came to us to beg was lying there fast asleep. Never to my last hour shall I forget that child's appearance. She was dressed, if I may say dressed, for she was half naked, in an old frock that I had given her. Her tangled hair was loose about her shoulders; her face was white and pinched like that of an old and badly-fed person. In her dirty little fingers she held a piece of turnip which I think she had stolen from a field about a mile from where she lay. I think she must have stolen it, for when she awoke, which she did soon,

and saw me sitting on the grass beside her, she sat up and hastily tried to hide it. In a moment, however, she burst into tears and said, "I was so *clemmed;* I was so dreadfully *clemmed!*" I pretended not to see the thing with which she had tried to appease her hunger or to notice her tears. Looking as cheerful as I could, I said, "I want a little girl like you to go on errands for me." "O, please, will you have me, will you, please!" she cried, jumping up and throwing the turnip away. "But I have only this frock to go anywhere." "Never mind," I said; "if you will be good and honest," and as I said this I glanced towards the place where she had thrown the half-eaten turnip. "But, please," she cried, catching my meaning, "I was so *clemmed;* I will be so good if you will only have me!" It ended in her coming, and a good girl she was, and did well in the service of a lady with whom I was acquainted when she was old enough to go to her.'

When some words of pity had been expressed for the poor child, Mrs. Cadwallador remarked:

'You saw the little brook that runs at the bottom of the lane, Pansy?'

'Yes, aunt, the brook with the stepping-stone laid across.'

'Yes. Your uncle was driving home one afternoon. When he reached this place he saw a crowd of people about one part, and stood up for a moment to see what was amiss. There was an opening in the crowd, and a man stepped out, bearing in his arms the dead body of a little boy about three years old. "What is it?" my husband asked. "He fell in the water, Sir," the father answered, "and was too weak to get out, I suppose; anyway he is dead." The poor fellow lifted the cold white face of the boy to his own, kissing it fondly, and striving to keep

back his tears. "I don't know how to take him to his mother, I am sure," he said, "she will take on so." There was the flying figure of a woman seen coming across the field; some one told the man it was his wife; so it was. The poor thing kissed her dead child, and cried sadly as they walked home together. "Don't cry, my wench," the husband said; "you know what David said about his little lad—we shall go to him; don't cry." "No, I won't, not much; let me cry a little bit, Charlie. My pretty, pretty curly-headed baby! But after all, Charlie, it is easier to drown than *clem.*" "Hush," the man answered sternly, "don't say that or you will drive me mad, and heaven knows I am nearly that now!" So the poor things walked away silently.'

'My wife has told you a sad story,' said Mr. Cadwallador, "but it is true. More than one has declared that he would prefer any death to that of starvation.'

'Well,' resumed Mrs. Cadwallador, 'as the strike goes on, things don't improve, of course. It is not one child here and there that suffers, but *all.* In these times, the poor little creatures that never did any one any harm must suffer. They used to shout and jump and run about on the green and the hill-side; they used to trudge off to school, so clean and tidy, with their dinner tied up in a basket and a piece of bread and butter in their hands. But as the strike goes on they are quieter. There is no running races to the top of the hill now. No jumping over the brook, or swinging on the gates. They seem best to like to lie about the grass and talk or sleep. The spring-time and gay life of childhood seem gone; all the sparkle, the restlessness, the quick motion of free, happy youth has left *them.* It begins to go when the strike commences;

as it goes on, the change is more clearly seen; now it is all gone. Yes, all that, as well as the bread and butter, the potatoes and milk, mother's cup of tea, father's dinner,—all goes with the strike. It brings nothing but sad hearts and leaves nothing but weakened frames, thin cheeks and sunken, hollow eyes, except, indeed, further mistrust and greater dissatisfaction between masters and men.'

Harry and his wife were shocked at the sad stories; and he remarked that a tale had once been told him about some children who, at the time of a long strike, had been fed upon potato-peelings, and even on the 'wash prepared for the pigs.'

'That's a bit wild, Harry,' said his friend. 'You know if there had been peelings there must have been potatoes, which there were not; and as to the means of making "wash," there were none, even if there had been pigs to eat it, which there were not; for the pigs that should have been fattened for the winter's bacon, were sold to meet the *shop-bill;* but soon the shop itself went, as a matter of course, like everything else.'

'But,' said Mrs. Cadwallador, 'to resume my not very pleasant tale: very soon fever set in, a low wasting fever. The doctors said many died who would surely have recovered if they could have received proper nourishment, but there was no possibility of obtaining it.

'That is certainly so,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'it was more famine than fever that killed the children. Why, the poor miserable-looking people who gathered round the graves of their dead, seemed ready to lie down and die themselves. Eliza, you remember that poor Anne Martin; how fearfully she suffered?'

'Only too well,' she returned; 'no one who knew her could ever forget her great sorrow.'

Mr. Cadwallador resumed: 'This poor woman's children both died of fever on the same day. My wife went to the house when she heard of the deaths, and can tell you that the poor things were more like skeletons than anything else. An old ragged shawl covered them as they lay side by side on the straw bed, bleached and wasted by starvation and fever combined, the bones nearly through the white skin. God had surely taken them in mercy. They were buried side by side in the same grave, and a very terrible thing it was to see the poor mother standing, as she would do, close by the side of the small coffins, and watching them lowered into their last resting-place. When the last was put down, she cried aloud, "My babies, my babies, my two dear little babies!" wringing her hands and looking into the little grave, while her tears fell thick and fast. The clergyman tried to go on with the service, but at last fairly broke down, closed the book, and tried to comfort her. I think she must have lost her senses, for the time at least, for she turned fiercely to him and said, "Will your soft words bring my babies back to life?" He put his hand over his eyes, as she again spoke. "Will they feed the one that is bad at home? Will they?" The good man (and he was a good man) trembled as he said, "No, my poor friend, they will not. I would to heaven it could be so." And so I am sure he did. It was pitiful to see that gentleman looking so helpless. He had done all one man could do. His wife and he had visited the sick and old and dying. But what could one poorly-paid country clergyman do in the case of these hundreds of starving people?'

'Where was the woman's husband,' asked Harry, 'that she had to bear all this sorrow alone?'

'He, like many others, was not improved by the

strike. He had got into a lazy, hang-about sort of way, out of temper with his employer and himself and all around him. The feeble moans of the sick children, the sharp cry of hunger from those that were recovering and needed building up again, as well, perhaps, as the reproaches of the distracted wife, did not make the home any more comfortable. So he with several others had gone away to get work, it was said, if possible. At all events, he was away when the children died and were buried. Of course the already burdened " parish " had that to do.'





CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER AND FATAL RESULTS OF THE STRIKE.

> 'The laws I deal bear no appeal,
> Though ruthless and unjust.'—Cook.

'STILL the strike continued. As a matter of course things are worse every day. There were large woods in the neighbourhood where game was preserved by the gentry about. I have no doubt that before this time many of the colliers knew the flavour of hare soup or roast partridge, but there had been no great trouble with them. Now, however, the men were seen to leave their homes in the evening with their dogs; and "lean dogs" they were. Among themselves it was very well understood where they were going, and why the dogs were kept so close to their masters' side. One man used to boast that his dog could tell a keeper a mile off, and would hide in a hedge until he had passed. The men were nearly all poachers then, and in the dark of night they carried the game to a town not very far distant, where they contrived to sell it quietly. Now and then a poacher was caught and made an example of; that means, being sent to prison for so long, whence he comes back, not a more respectable man, but with the nickname "Gaol-bird," which is sure to stick to him for life. Even if he had had

another, as many of them have, "Old Gaol-bird" is his future name.'

'But during the time of which you have spoken, how do men in your position manage to live among them?' asked Harry.

'We just pull through,' Mr. Arkwright replies; 'Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallador have told you what a sad time it is with the whole class, but they have not told you what they and their household have had to put up with. I know that there have been times when Mrs. Cadwallador dared not wear a decent gown or bonnet, and when the servant dared not go down to the shop, lest it should be thought they were in possession of money or goods. But it never seems to occur to such men or their wives, that they as well as others should provide for a slack time; they are, as a rule, such reckless spenders of money.'

'But they don't touch you, don't do anything to you?' asked Pansy, looking with sympathy at her lady friends.

'Sometimes,' laughed Mrs. Cadwallador. 'Arkwright, tell us of the night the rioters came to Llanroth.'

'That was when the men took it into their heads that the managers were to blame in some dispute or other,' replied Mr. Arkwright. 'So they gave notice that if their demands were not complied with, they should "mob the managers' houses" on a given day. This was not a thing to be laughed at; for if the rough colliers took a matter of this sort in hand, though they would not, I think, *kill* a man, yet they might contrive to do a good deal of damage to his property. So a look-out was kept, and some of the better class men went in and out amongst the rioters and so got to know their

intended movements. You have seen how they sit or rather "squat" on the ground? Yes? Well, then, they were to be seen in groups of twenty or more, talking with earnest, even savage faces, evidently discussing their proceedings. It was clear the storm was about to burst.

'I remember very well helping the then manager here to nail up his garden gate, and to put boards across the front windows and strong props against the doors. The things that were likely to be damaged by stones, should any be thrown, were removed. A bed was brought downstairs and placed over the piano. The servant, with the children, was sent to the top of the house for safety, and some half-dozen trusty colliers placed themselves in the different places which it was probable might be attempted should the rioters really come. Several more were within hail if they were wanted. The mistress of the house stayed amongst the men with her husband, making them their supper and talking cheerfully, until one of the children came down to say that he had looked through the window and the men were all coming with sticks, and Lillie was frightened, and nurse said, "would ma please go up." A large fierce dog was kept on the premises, and on this night especial care was taken to secure him, for if he once got loose, he might with his strong jaws and sharp teeth break a man's arm.

'The moon was at the full, and the shadows of the men fell on the fields and hedgerows as they came noisily along, making their number appear larger than it really was, and it was quite large enough. There were about four hundred men and boys, and I am sorry to say some women too. They had already been at the houses of other managers in

the locality. One man's premises had been invaded, his garden rails torn up, the garden produce destroyed, and the house windows broken. A rioter went into the house and brought out with him its owner, who did all he could to appear good-tempered, although he was a good deal afraid too, as he told me afterwards. The men bothered and talked foolishly, many of them at once. At last the man asked, "What do you want with me? I have never done you any harm in your life." "You have oppressed us," said one. "Trodden us down," said another. "Treated us like slaves," echoed a third. "I have done nothing of the sort," said the manager; "I am a servant like yourselves, and have no power, even if I had the will, to do you any injury."

'"You are not to *gabble* so much, master," said a tall fellow coming to the front; "we are going to do the talking to-night. I tell you that some of us have made up our minds to punish every manager about the country. Maybe you have not done so bad as some, but you must be made an example of; because if you have done nothing yet, I dare say you will in a bit; so it will be just as well to give you your punishment beforehand." This stale joke was received by the men with a loud laugh, and the manager said he breathed more freely, for this laugh seemed fuller of mischief than malice.

'"Now then, gaffer," said the same man, "what will you do? Would you rather be ducked in the horsepond, or will you go out of the county?" "Go out of the county, most decidedly," he told them; "but I must tell my wife before I go." This was allowed. The collier who brought him out, took him into the house, and in a very few minutes he was with them again. Gathering round him, they hurry him to the station, which lay some distance

from his house. Here he was made to take a ticket for some place a hundred miles off, and pay for it himself. A train was just coming, and, amid shouts and laughter, he was hurried into a carriage, and the train left the station. "That is a capital shot," said the men as they prepared to go to another manager's house, "he is done with." "I have done well to get a slow train," said the manager; "I can get out in ten minutes." And so he did at the first place where the train stopped, and in two hours from his having been taken away from home he was back again. The rioters satisfied themselves with smashing a few doors and windows at one or two other houses, and then proceeded to the house of my friend, and, as the child had told his parents, were close by, shouting and tearing away at the gate, which went through with a crash. Some tear up shrubs and flowers, while others break open the windows. The dog, always fierce, now leapt and snarled, tearing with such strength at his chain that at length it snapped, and with a deep growl he is in the midst of them and has a man down in a moment, to the consternation of many. In another instant the master of the house leaps through one of his own broken windows, has his hand on the dog's collar, and with words and blows compels him to relinquish the hold he had taken on the man's shoulder. "What do you want here? You scamps and cowards!" he cried angrily, still with both hands holding the infuriated animal. "Who do you call cowards?" they cry; "you who dare not face the men yourself and so set that brute on us? Who is the coward there?" "I did not set the dog on you, although you deserve it: he has broken his chain, as you may see. But I should like to ask YOU who are the cowards, those men



'You scamps and cowards!' he cried angrily. *See p. 94.*

who try to protect their homes and families, or those who, like you, prowling like vagabonds in the dead of night, come frightening little children to death?" He was much excited, and spoke in a loud, angry voice as he said, "Do you know what you have done in addition to all this work?" And he pointed to the broken windows and the spoilt garden. "Do you know or care that your noise has so alarmed my little child, a baby that never hurt a fly, that she is in convulsions at this very moment? Cowards? Yes! stand aside and let me pass!" As he spoke, he lifted the dog in his arms and threw him into the room from which he had just come; one of the men inside secured him, and the manager turned again to face the mob. "Let me go by!" he said. "I am going for a doctor. Stand aside, and do not be murderers as well as madmen, as you will be if you hinder me, for my child may die. I am not

afraid of you myself," he said, as he saw a few of them conferring together; "and there are those in my house who will deal with you if you dare to cross my threshold. Let me pass!" The tall man who seemed to be the speaker of the company came forward and in a lower voice said, "I'll fetch the doctor, gaffer. Go in! go in! We don't want to hurt the children. Fall back, chaps," he cried in a loud voice, "fall back!" The men really did so, and in a few minutes the receding footsteps were heard going down the lane. Shortly the tall collier was seen coming back with the doctor. That gentleman had not gone to bed, for he said, "I shall very likely be wanted to-night." But the little child never recovered, the "mob" had frightened it to death!

'Never were people more ashamed. I am glad to say it; they were *all* heartily ashamed of the affair, although they fancied they were driven to it by starvation. I think the women were fully persuaded that they were doing something to benefit their families; and you have heard how they are situated in a strike.'

'But, Mr. Arkwright,' said Harry, 'do not the Unions keep the men when they are out? I understood they were supported pretty well.'

'Pretty well!' said the manager, with a slight sneer. 'As I see it, the affair lies in small compass. All that are in the Union are required to pay something to its funds each week. This fund is said to be for the support of the men when out of work. Let us suppose a strike, and take one man's case as a specimen of all. We will give him a wife and say four children; I am putting it low, you see. Well, the Union is supposed to give this man, say ten shillings a week to keep himself, wife, and four

children. First he must pay his contribution to the Union fund, then there is the rent of his cottage. Being on strike, he does not get the usual allowance of coal. Supposing we estimate these three things at four shillings, there are just six shillings left to keep six persons for a week. They don't see any of the "Roast Beef of Old England," nor the bread and cheese of Wales, poor fellows! No doubt they get this money regularly while it can be afforded; but there are "salaries" to be paid to agents who travel and hold meetings, and little matters of that sort make sad inroads on the fund. If the Union has not got money, well, the men are told so; and that is the end of their being pretty well kept. Of course ten shillings is better than nothing, but I shall always maintain that the colliers had better be at their work, and on their pay-night carry home twenty shillings, if they can take no more, than be hanging about sometimes for two hours waiting for the beggarly ten shillings from a Union, paid through the hands of an agent.'

'I fully agree with you, Mr. Arkwright,' said Harry, 'that they had. But why do you say that sometimes the women are quite as bad as, if not worse than, the men?'

'Yes, why is that so?' added Pansy.

Mr. Arkwright was about to reply, when his wife, who had sat quietly listening, interrupted him by saying in her impetuous way:

'I know! At least, I can guess how it is that the women are so mad as to say and do such things as they do. Don't you see, Pansy, that these women have had good wages to keep house on, up to the times about which we have been hearing; and now, you see, there is only just the Union money, and they are expected to make it do, and keep them all

as before; of course it won't, how can it? Then they get cross and maddened when they see their poor little ones fading and dying before their very eyes, and they can do nothing to help them. Why, fancy my having to keep house on a bit of money like that! and how should I feel if I saw all the bright and happy life crushed out of my boy by hunger; if I had nothing to set before Tom when he ought to have a good dinner; and if I had to walk two miles without bonnet or shawl to *beg* two quarts of soup before I could feed my children? I should go mad, like they do. I should do anything, I know I should.'

There was a smile at Nellie's earnest way of expressing herself. She saw it and said: 'Don't laugh, pray! I mean all I say. There is nothing I should stop at, where my husband and child were concerned. And tell me if one woman's heart is not like another? Do not all wives and mothers feel alike on this one thing at least? O, I think so; and I quite understand them, poor things, and fully sympathize with them at the worst, as well as with their poor children.'

'Well done, Nellie Arkwright!' said Mrs. Cadwallador, 'well done! That is the way to think about matters—to ask how we should like such things ourselves.'

'You also said the boys were unruly and bad to manage?'

'Yes, Mrs. Osbourn, that is so. They are young and foolish; they think it grand to sit under hedges, or on the road-side, and discuss strikes and other things of which they are entirely ignorant; though perhaps each lad there considers himself quite capable of taking charge of the entire Principality. Then if it comes to a riot, few can smash windows or ruin gardens better than these half-grown, reckless boys.'



CHAPTER XIII.

AN AMUSING INCIDENT IN A STRIKE.

'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.'—Shakespeare.

'There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, it is said,' Mr. Cadwallador remarked; 'and I must take your minds from the very melancholy things you have heard, to something very different, although I shall still speak of a strike. When I was a lad there was a great uproar at a colliery close to where I then lived. Some hundreds of men were "out"; and as "Satan finds some mischief still, For idle hands to do," so he contrived some for these men. They began to parade the roads, to the great alarm of their quieter neighbours. Next they began to cast a covetous eye upon their orchards and hen-roosts, and indeed on whatever came first to hand. Rumour said they intended soon to destroy all the farm produce, and drive away the cattle or kill them. The houses of all the landowners and gentlemen were to come down. One fine old mansion was to be attacked first; all its valuable contents were to be brought out and

divided among the rioters, and afterwards the building was to be burned to the ground "as a warning." As a warning about what, I do not know; nor who was to be warned. Rumour carried this news to a small town through which the mob must pass on their way to the doomed house. Great was the consternation in this little town. Terrible visions floated before the thunderstruck townspeople. They saw their shops pillaged, windows destroyed, husbands and sons slain in defence of hearth and home. The coming terror was the only thing discussed that day. Locksmiths and blacksmiths did a good trade; for it was suddenly discovered that almost all the locks in the town, as well as bolts, bars, and hinges, were out of repair. "But," said some of the most valiant, "we must not allow it. We must call the Yeomanry up: they must keep the rioters in their own county; they must not suffer them to cross the river that divides the counties. If it is thought needful, the soldiers must drive them before them at the point of the bayonet. Yes! they must be taught a lesson." Everybody said "yes," so the Yeomanry had notice to be in the saddle in a few hours' time. Now it happened by some strange mischance that a great number of the soldiers were taken ill just then, and could not possibly take horse or prepare for battle. There were people spiteful enough to say that the soldiers were afraid of the colliers; but you know one would hardly like to say that; eh, Arkwright?'

'Why appeal to me?' said his friend, taking up the laugh.

'Why, I thought that you, being an officer in the volunteers, might be able to tell us, that's all.'

'Go on with your story, and don't slander the

defenders of the country,' said the manager, good-humouredly.

'Ah, well, several of the soldiers were sick, but not all. A goodly number, in their bright jackets and waving plumes, rode into the little old town to march against the sooty foe; or perhaps I ought to say to take position on the side of the bridge which was not in the county of the rebellious colliers. They formed, and were marched out of the town to a merry tune. The few miles they had to go were soon passed; the bridge was in sight, but no mob. "Halt!" cries the commanding officer. "Halt!" cried each inferior officer in turn. "Halt!" said every man to himself. And so they did, sitting in their saddles like a "passel of staters," as an old woman from a cottage above told her friend.

'There was a little time spent in placing the men; then a flag was waved, and the band played gaily. A rather elderly gentleman, arrayed in a black velvet gown trimmed with sable fur, carried a roll of paper in his hand. He was Mayor of the little town; the roll he held in his hand was a copy of the Riot Act. Certainly *he* ought to awe the rebels, if the soldiers cannot. They waited a very long time; at last a scout reported "They're coming!" The soldiers roused up; the Mayor cleared his throat and straightened his robe, that nothing of his dignity might be lost. The tramp of feet and the hum of many voices were heard,—nearer,—yet nearer. A bend in the road for a little time hid the soldiers and colliers from each other. Turning this bend, they were face to face. The colliers stood still; the Mayor, accompanied by the superior officers of the Yeomanry, rode across the bridge; unrolling his paper, he cleared his throat again, and read as follows:—

'OUR SOVEREIGN LORD THE KING chargeth and commandeth all persons being here assembled immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful businesses, upon the pains contained in an Act of King George for preventing tumult and riotous assemblies.

GOD SAVE THE KING!"

'Upon hearing this the colliers consulted together silently; the soldiers awaited them with their carbines at the "ready." I ought to have told you that this particular spot was well wooded; plantations of young trees grew thickly, and gave shelter to the hares and rabbits so numerous there. A gamekeeper was in the coppice, and stayed to look on. He declared afterwards that both soldiers and colliers looked terribly frightened at the sight of each other; and the thought occurred to him, "How they would scamper if I fired!" The thought was father to the act: in an instant he fired into the air. This our valiant colliers took to be the signal for an attack; and imagining, as I suppose, discretion to be the better part of valour, turned and fled in any direction save that where the soldiers were stationed. Some of the *horses* belonging to the Yeomanry became very uneasy at the same moment and galloped off as the colliers had done, but in an opposite direction. Of course their riders had to go with them; against their mind, no doubt.'

'Just so!' laughed the manager; 'I see!'

'Well, there was no further fear of the rioters troubling the town, or burning down the houses of the gentry that day; so they all rode home, but rode back each day for some little time to keep the colliers on their own side of the bridge; though for all I could learn they did not try to

cross it again. Still they were ready for mischief, and when not alarmed themselves, greatly alarmed the quiet part of the population.

'They purposed going in a body to another place, perhaps a dozen miles from the scene of their last alarm. The news was there before them, and another body of soldiers, who had been ordered to be in readiness to meet the mob, was at once despatched to overawe them. Unfortunately for them their horses didn't like the ground; it was bad for their feet. You remember, Pansy, those heaps of cinders and slag from the ironworks I showed you?'

'Yes, very well.'

'It was under such a place where they all met. Some of the roughest were for a fight, for they were ashamed of the affair of the bridge. Some stones were thrown, one soldier was struck down. Previous orders had been given that, if it were thought needful to fire, the first volley was to be sent into the air. As it seemed likely the men would not retire even after the reading of the Riot Act, the order to "Fire" was given, in the hope that the men would take alarm and get away. Nor was the hope in vain; for the crack of the carbines had not died away, before there was a general stampede. Away they flew, men and lads; and here they had an advantage; they ran like monkeys up the refuse-heaps, where they were quite at home, well knowing that the horses could not follow, for their feet already were irritated by the road. And now from the heights of the cinder hills, amid shouts of laughter, they pelt the red-jackets and their steeds unmercifully with the slag and the stones they find there. The horses could not stand this; they galloped away as fast as their legs could carry them. It was never decided who won that battle.

The soldiers say that they drove the colliers before them; and the colliers say they drove the soldiers before them. I was too young to know much about it, but can remember the fun that was made about these riots. A local poet (who was also a printer) composed, printed, and published a satirical ballad on the occasion, called "The Battle of Clinkers' Hill." I saw a copy years ago, and simply remember that each verse had a chorus, running something like this:—

"God bless the King,
And those brave men
That made the clinkers rattle!"'

'From this,' said Harry, 'I imagine opinion was in favour of the colliers.'

'It would appear so. But really there could not have been much to choose between the Red-jackets and the Flannel-suits. I have told you this to show you that there may be a ridiculous side even to a strike. Though whatever aspect it takes, a strike is a bad thing.'

'Would all the men join in such a riot as that?' asked Pansy.

'No, no!' said Mr. Cadwallador. 'There are always good and bad men in a colliery as well as everywhere else. Such as could make up their minds to make the best of things, kept on working, considering that half a loaf is better than no bread. They were subjected to a good deal of annoyance from the unruly, riotous set, who would steal their tools, damage their gardens, chase and kill their fowls, and poison their pigs or dogs, until a number of the disturbers were prosecuted. So things became quieter, and gradually they were all re-employed, with the exception of four or five who were suspected of having attempted to damage the machinery at the works, and so, of course, to endanger the lives of the workmen.

'I should be afraid of such colliers as those,' said Pansy; 'although you seem to say I need not fear the men about here, Mr. Cadwallador.'

'There is a great difference between the men of fifty years ago and the men of to-day,' he replied; 'and this I fully believe to be due to the power and influence of religion. We see good and pious men now, where there were in the past reckless, wicked ones. But still there is room for improvement; and a few more such good fellows as Arkwright here, would work wonders among the men. Do you know that he is superintendent of the Sunday-school at Llanroth?'

Harry and his wife say they had not heard it.

'No, Tom is a quiet man about himself in anything; but he has—don't interrupt me; I shall speak,—I say he has done more for the good of the colliers hereabout than all the Unions.'

'I noticed the respect the men showed to Mr. Arkwright,' said Harry; 'and saw, the day we were down the pit, how readily they observed anything he said to them. I am glad to know the reason.'

Arkwright was about to speak, when Mrs. Cadwallador rose hastily, saying:—

'It's true, Tom, you need not attempt to deny it. Every word Mr. Cadwallador has said is true. I only wish you had all the men in the same mind as yourself; we should not fear anything then.'

'Some of the men are good?' Pansy remarks.

'Yes,' replied the manager, 'there is not a better man in the world than John Roberts, so patient and forbearing, so anxious to do good. I always say he is fitter to be a king than a collier. But we have many good fellows besides him.'

The clock on the chimney-piece strikes twelve, but our friends have not very far to walk. Good-nights are said, and they soon reach Mr. Cadwallador's home.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE VILLAGE FAIR.

'Here is a revel! Each joyous fellow
Has forgotten awhile his care.
. . . . . .
But his eyes are as bright
With each new delight,
As if sorrow had never been there!'—J. E. Carpenter.

'YOU have never seen a country fair, have you?' said Mr. Cadwallador, to our friend, Mrs. Osbourn.

'No, but I should like to very much.'

'I wish we had thought of it earlier, Eliza. I am afraid all the stable-room will be taken up now, or we might drive.'

'How far is it to the place where the fair is held, uncle?' asked Harry.

'Not far, if you can cross the hill.'

'I can cross the hill very well indeed,' declared Pansy. 'I should like it.'

'Then we will do so. You will stay in, I expect?' he said to Mrs. Cadwallador.

'Yes, John,' said that lady cheerfully; 'I should not attempt the climb, but you are a good walker, and the young folk will manage nicely. The carts and conveyances have been going for more than

three hours; you will see another phase of collier life that is amusing enough.'

In due course our friends, accompanied by Mr. Cadwallador, set out for Llanroth fair. It is the largest fair of the year, and all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, men, women and children, consider they ought to be there. So they are to be seen in groups, with immense baskets on their arms, trudging along and chatting gaily to each other. All are in their 'best things,'—bright scarlet skirts, bright flowers in their bonnets, and bright plaid shawls upon their shoulders. The men are in their best clothing, not now with Davy lamps or black faces; though they have the same walk, the same independent air, and low down in a safe pocket is the money, tied up in a small bag. They meet friends, sometimes relations, on the way; and very friendly and hearty are the greetings between them. Good-humoured chat and jokes pass, the crowd increasing all the way until they reach the fair. The village itself is one long street, if we exclude the numberless houses which have of late sprung up about the hill-side, and which are dignified with the name of New-town; but it is principally in the long street and an adjoining field that the fair is held.

Falling in with the stream of holiday-makers, our friends wend their way to the show-field. This always being to the colliers' mind a source of special attraction, there is already a large crowd of men, women and children in front of the 'Wild beast show,' where the brazen trumpets and the big drums are discoursing wretched music.

A broad canvas hung in front of the 'establishment' represents, as explained by the show-man, 'Rampant Lions,' and a 'Royal Bengal Tiger.' This last-men-

tioned beast is seen to have fixed his claws in the bare shoulder of a prostrate man, and a very large quantity of painted blood follows the brute's clutch; while the man who is lying in such an uncomfortable situation, gazes quite calmly with his deep blue eyes into the tiger's face, and takes the whole affair as a matter of course. Then there are snarling wolves and growling bears; impudent monkeys, magnificent birds; and three highly-coloured camels, on whose backs are seated simpering ladies in Oriental costume. All this, be it remembered, is on the flaunting canvas outside.

Inside, after you have paid a shilling for admittance, you are favoured with the sight of a living but mangy old lion, who looks at his interviewers with perfect indifference. In the next compartment is the 'Royal Bengal tiger,' a miserable-looking stuffed animal, considerably moth-eaten. The bear appears to be sulky and will not turn his head, though some of the collier lads try to rouse him by poking him with their sticks. At length one more shrewd than his fellows declares:

'I'll be bound he's stuffed, like that tiger!'

The two wolves are fair specimens of their kind, and snarl spitefully at the lookers-on. There are a few restless monkeys, which sit 'gibbering' at each other, or clamour for the nuts the young folk throw to them. A cunning old ostrich goes about amongst the people gathered there, begging with its eyes the cakes and sweets the boys are ready to give. The man who sells these commodities, and who pretends to be a stranger to the establishment, finds himself to be in a good place for sales, so he doubles the prices of his wares, and even then his stock is soon cleared out.

Close to the stove, where there is a small fire, is the

serpent-box; but it is empty. The people are told that the reptiles were in perfect health, but that a sharp frost in the early spring had destroyed them all in one night, a most serious loss to the establishment. This is told so pathetically, that the disappointment of the colliers gives way to pity, and some of them are quite disposed to make a collection on the spot to enable the proprietor to buy another. The camel—for there had been only one—had died that morning in trying to get up the hill; any one could see the dead body for twopence 'extra.' So there was no deception in that!

A few more caravans lie in various corners, containing a 'Shropshire Giant,' or a 'Yorkshire Giantess,' 'a Fortune-Telling Horse,' 'a learned Pig,' a 'Lamb with six legs,' and one without any legs at all. Then there is a 'Boxing-booth,' where a stout man who wears the gloves gives the enterprising young men who choose to confront him a few sharp 'taps,' disfiguring their faces and very nearly knocking the breath out of their bodies. For this bit of 'horse-play' the silly youths contentedly pay threepence to the proprietor of the booth.

There are swing-boats, hobby-horses, and 'Aunt Sallys.' A little further on, a 'tumbler' plays his fantastic tricks and gets a fair share of patronage. But by far the greatest number of amused, laughing spectators are gathered at the lower end of the large field, where, covered with check curtains, stands the little square machine we all remember so well. If the checked drapery is forgotten, there is no mistaking the 'Roo-ti-too-it' and shrill cry of 'Punch.' There crows the old favourite who screams as impudently as ever, knocks poor Judy over, bangs the 'baby' about, upsets the judge, hangs the

hangman, and, sitting astride his shoulders, gives his old cry of 'victory,' just as he did years ago. Much of the colliers' money comes to him to-day; many, both men and women, stay to see a second performance, and willingly pay a second time.

There are things to buy and sell as well as to see. Here is a dealer in earthenware, who with hoarse voice announces the price of his wares, rattling and clashing them together like cymbals. He is particular in informing his customers that he has nothing whatever to do with the man on the other side of the way, who looks at him contemptuously. Close by is the travelling draper, who has spread out a large assortment of dresses, shawls, caps, curtains, feathers, flowers, and ribbons of every imaginable colour. A very tempting stall is this to the young women; many pairs of gloves and yards of ribbon find their way to the girls' pockets at their sweethearts' expense. The shoemakers have a stall; and here are to be seen mothers and fathers of families, who take up the strongly-nailed boots and examine them with a critical eye, lay them down again, go a short distance away, consult together and count their money. If between them they have the requisite funds, they go back to the stall, and generally succeed in making their purchase at a cheaper rate than is agreeable to the stall-keeper, who as he folds the parcel tells his customer, 'They are not mine for the money.'

'No,' says one of these buyers, 'but they are mine!' and packing his purchase under his arm, he walks off chuckling.

Here are rows of stalls occupied by

'The butcher and baker, and candlestick maker!'

Now we see the 'Cheap Literature' stall, where all

the horrors of the midnight assassin order are swiftly disposed of. There are tales of love, jealousy, murder, suicide, transportations, executions, and all the terrible catalogues of crime that can be collected or imagined, and which are unfortunately in such request with the young people of this and every district. However, we gladly note, close by, the 'Bible' cart. Many young women, apparently servants, buy a copy, and ask the man if he will 'please write in the name for them.' This he does willingly, and says a kindly word to the young people while he does so.

'What shall I give you for a "Fairing?"' a smart young collier asks his sweetheart.

'I should like one of those gilt-edged Bibles,' she tells him.

So with the money in his hand, he says, 'The very nicest you have, master.'

Several are shown to the girl: and when the selection is made, the Bible-seller asks:

'Shall I write your name in it, Miss?'

The girl blushes and looks shyly in her lover's face, who replies for her:

'No, no, thank you; because she is not going to keep the name she has now. As soon as the banns are asked out, she is going to have my name!' And he laughed joyously.

'Ah, I see; that is it, is it?' says the man; and as he places the book in the girl's hand, he says, 'I hope you will read some of it every day and try and serve God.'

She blushes still more, curtseys prettily, and says, 'Yes, Sir; I will, indeed!'

And no doubt she will; for both she and her lover are members at the chapel.



CHAPTER XV.

A FURTHER LOOK AT THE FAIR.

**'The foot of the dancer, the music's loved thrill,
The shout and the laughter grew suddenly still.'**

A MAN, dressed in shabby black clothes, standing on a box raised a little higher than the people by whom he is surrounded, is calling loudly to passers by to 'look here.' Our friends are constrained to look, and they learn that the man who calls so loudly is, according to his own description of himself, a 'medicine vendor.' Just now he is extolling the virtues of a celebrated 'Pill' made from the recipe of a 'famous and celebrated physician.' Disdaining the use of the time-honoured box used by the faculty in general, he has at his feet a pretty good-sized basket, which holds the wonderful medicine, and he is briskly selling the pills at the rate of twelve a penny.

'Only try them, ladies and gentlemen,' he cries; 'only try them. I assure you that if you do, you will never need medicine any more!'

This 'Doctor' is a roving scamp, who has heard of the fair and made up his vagrant mind to see what is to be 'picked up.' He has expended threepence in a crumby loaf, and another threepence in

a strong-smelling drug, and having stealthily scraped a little soot from a lodging-house chimney, he has, with the aid of a little water, kneaded, pounded, and rolled the compound into small pellets, alias 'Pills.' Here they are loose in the basket at his feet, and constitute his whole stock-in-trade. That is what the good folks are invited to look at. Not much to shout about, yet he still cries 'Look here.' They look, and what is worse, they 'try them!'

As a matter of course there is a 'Cheap Jack;' a country fair would be incomplete without one. He good-humouredly chats with the people and cheats them even while they look into his impudent face. A woman has bought a can for fetching water from the well, but when she has paid for it finds it is defective. This she tells 'Jack.'

'Is there a hole in it?' he asks in feigned surprise.

'Yes, there is,' the woman replies indignantly.

'Well, then,' he answers coolly, 'you ought to pay me sixpence more; because, you know, you can put it to three uses: you can fetch your water in it; you can use it, if it runs badly, for a watering pan; and you can strain your cabbage with it!'

A boy has bought a knife, a smart affair to look at, but the youth cries out, 'It won't cut, scarcely any!'

'Well, no,' says Jack in a fatherly way, 'no, my lad! It would never do to let such a sharp chap as you have one with too much edge. See, I'll change it for you. Here is one that won't cut a bit. Will you have that?'

'No, I won't! You're a cheat!' says the lad in a fury.

'You're an unreasonable young monkey,' replies Jack; 'you do not know when you're well off.'

Before the discomfited youth can reply, Jack is

busy, turning round in both hands a common-looking cruet stand.

'Now, then,' he asks, 'who will buy this solid silver, German silver, no-silver-at-all cruet-stand? It has four bottles, warranted not cut glass. You, ma'am?' to a woman who was looking on. The woman shakes her head to signify no.

'No, not you, of course; you're a regular cruet-stand yourself. There's vinegar in your face, pepper in your temper, mustard on your tongue, and cayenne on your nose: that's what makes it so red. Of course you don't want it!'

So he goes on, chattering and cheating: the men seem to like to hear him; they enjoy his stale and at times very doubtful jokes.

One remarks to his fellow, 'what a "preacher" that man would make if he were only converted!'

But Jack, with his many faults, is a better man than mine host of the 'Flying Horse,' just over the way, although he has set apart a large room for what he is pleased to call the benefit of the young folk. The majority of the parents of these same young folk entirely disagree with him as to the benefit to their sons and daughters. It is a dancing-room, and what is worse, a drinking-room too.

The landlord has hanging from one of the upper windows of the 'Flying Horse,' a large blue silk flag, on which is painted a club emblem, two hands clasped together, and underneath in bright letters the words 'Brotherly Love.' In a room adjoining the dancing-room, from whence issue the fumes of bad tobacco and worse beer, are old men, gray-headed or bald, men in the prime of life, lads of twenty, and, sad to say, little children. Some are helplessly drunk, some are asleep; some are ill, as their white faces testify. A few of them have a

little money left: to these mine host is very polite; he even goes so far as to raise to a very old man's lips the mug of beer which his drunken hands refused to support.

At the lower end of the room, two men, who look dismal and wretched, are searching in vain for the price of another glass. They need not fumble so stupidly; their pockets are empty. Their money has all gone into the till of the 'Flying Horse.'

All? Yes, all! Johnny will cry his little heart out when father reels home without the toy he promised to bring 'from the fair.' Bessy has her doll's things ready to put on the new dolly that was to come 'from the fair.' Put them away, child; no doll will find its way to you to-night. No, nor the tea that was to have been taken for mother. No toys,—no tea;—only misery.

The clever host soon discovers that the funds are out, and decides that it is quite time for married men to be at home. So he calls up one of his stablemen, and between them they convey the drunken men downstairs and into the street, and there lay them down to get sober. They surely have not thought of it, but they have laid them right under the shadow of the blue silk flag that bears on its face the clasped hands, and the words 'Brotherly Love.' Ah! false flag, there is no brotherly love there!

It is growing late; the buying and selling are over. The decent people have taken their purchases in their big baskets and are going home. The roads and lanes are full of them. The children carry their trumpets, drums, squeaking toys, sweets, and all such things so dear to the little folk, with great glee. The men go together, talking and smoking; the

women speak of their purchases, each thinking her own best,—a good plan at all times.

These men will be up and at work in the morning, blithe as larks. Their wives and daughters will resume their duties next day, all the better for the change, they say. For the simple ones who pass the night under the blue flag, there is to come the next day's headache, the children's disappointed looks, the wife's reproaches, and the subsequent discovery that when pay-day comes round several days' wages have been stopped.

Cheap Jack will go, with his persuasive tongue and his trumpery wares, to dazzle the natives of some other place. Mine host, alas! will stay and still unfurl his blue flag; and many will walk under its shadow.





CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN'S HOME.

> **'Home's not merely roof and room,**
> **It needs something to endear it;**
> **Home is where the heart can bloom,**
> **Where there's some kind lip to cheer it!'—SWAIN.**

MY readers will remember that on the evening when Mrs. Cadwallador and her niece stood to see the colliers leaving their work, one of them, a tall upright man, stopped to speak to them, and that this same man entered the 'Echo' field, and 'Tum' and he and the echo made vocal music as the men hasted homewards. It is the same man who said Mr. Arkwright was fitter to be a king than a collier.

As John reaches the gate which opens into his well-kept garden, the voices of his little children are heard to cry in delighted tones, 'Here's daddy!'

'Ay!' says John to the

> **'Expectant wee things, toddling stacker thro',**
> **To meet their dad, wi' flickterin' noise and glee.'**

'Ay! here is daddy, sure enough. But you must wait until he has washed himself, and put these black things off. Then come and kiss him. Run away and look at mother's posies, just for a bit, until tea is ready.'

Mother's posies are certainly worth looking at as well as mother's *self*, as she greets her husband ere he reaches his doorstep, with, 'Will you not be glad of your tea, John? You look so hot. It's ready.'

Just on each side of the door, close to the latticed porch, grew some hollyhocks, full of blossom quite up to the top of their tall stems. Down each side of the narrow walk are rows of the 'crimson-tippit, modest' daisy; larger bunches of 'Hen and Chickens,' sweet-scented wallflowers, striped grasses, feathery golden-rod, old-fashioned sweet-william, snapdragon, blue and white violets, verbenas, and the pretty pale blue forget-me-not dotted many places in the side-plot. Large trees of fragrant lilac and some few evergreens formed a good background to the lower end of the garden, where roses grew in rich variety,—crimson, amber, white and pink, the old cabbage rose, the heavy and lovely moss-rose, the pretty damask rose; while the small wild dog-rose, with white and pink blossoms, and the sweet-scented briar, bloomed in the hawthorn fence all round the place. This garden is the special pride of John's wife and elder children. Their hands dig and plant and rake, and keep in such perfection the many plants and flowers, that they very rarely miss a 'Prize' at the local shows for one or two of their flowers or fruits. Very happy hours do the children spend here among these sweet gifts of the great Giver.

John's cottage is not large, but as bright and clean as willing hands can make it. It holds, in common with most of those of the respectable portion of the community, the highly-prized eight-day clock. This is its dark oaken case in a recess; nevertheless the white round face, on which are painted the words 'Tempus fugit,' gleams kindly on them, and the

solemn 'tick' issues from the corner like a grave and warning voice. Of course there is the chest of drawers, which does double duty as sideboard and wardrobe. On the polished top and in the centre is placed the 'family Bible,' and on a page ruled for that special purpose, there is, in John's handwriting, his own age and that of Jane his wife, with the date of their marriage. Then follow the birth of each child in order to the number of ten. On the line where the birth of the fourth is recorded is written, 'Went home on the 14th of September same year. Even so, Father!'

Some gay delf ornaments are placed there; a gay bird, stuffed, and covered with a glass shade, and 'mother's' workbox, complete the arrangement. Just above is a book-shelf, composed of four straight boards strung together with scarlet cord which is formed into a loop at the top. Here is John's library: like his home, it is small, but very precious to him.

Foremost is a 'Commentary on the Scriptures;' then 'Burder's Village Sermons,' 'Paley's Evidences of Christianity,' 'Josephus,' 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'The Whole Duty of Man,' 'Wesley's Sermons,' quite half-a-dozen Hymn-Books, some Magazines and Temperance periodicals, a few children's books suitable for the very young ones; and that was all. From the character of these books it will be guessed that John was either a Sunday-school teacher or a preacher. He is a Local-preacher; and herein he is rightly named, for from the time when he came a wailing babe to the valley of Llanroth, now forty-seven years ago, he had not lived away from that lovely spot. When John and Jane Smith his promised wife decided to begin together that walk through this life which can only be ended on the

shore of the dark and silent river, where the remaining one watches with unutterable anguish the receding form of the first to cross, John located himself and young wife in the cottage of which we now speak, where grew the large lilacs and the fragrant flowers.

For twenty years this humble servant of God had preached, prayed, and laboured amongst his own class, not seeking to be taken out of it, but to be a good and useful man in it. If the saying that 'a man is what he is at home,' be true (and who will deny it?), then this man with the black face and hard hands, who went across the fields swinging his Davy lamp, where he sang aloud, and where the echo caught up the song, is indeed one of those who do not covet or desire other men's goods, but have learned to labour to get their own living honestly, and to do their duty in that state of life into which it hath pleased God to call them. Honest, black-handed, but, as we shall see, brave-hearted John! No wonder that when his wife heard his song, she smiled, and her step was lighter than before.

'Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys and destiny obscure,
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the poor!'

Under the window, whose old-fashioned seat is filled with plants in full blossom, a large table is drawn and covered with a clean coarse cloth, and the homely fare is decently placed in readiness for the evening meal. John, washed and clad in his 'second-best' suit, is seen at the cottage door telling the children that tea is ready. He gives a kind word to the elder ones who come in, some from school, one from the stone quarry, where he is apprenticed, and another, a girl, from the shop in

the village where she is learning dress-making. They gather round the tea-table readily; for like most country children, they are blessed with good appetites. John takes the youngest child on his knee, and feeds her from his own cup or plate; 'for,' says he, 'mother has plenty to do to keep the rest in order.' It must not be supposed that at this man's table there were not the usual sights and sounds to be met with everywhere, if health, good humour and home liberty be at the board. O, no! There is the usual conversation between the boys of kites, rabbits, or marbles; the girls are full of little affairs of their own, dolls and dolls' frocks principally, the elder girl, by virtue of her knowledge as apprentice to a dress-maker, being often appealed to. As a matter of course there is the usual cry for 'More!' Not like the timid request of poor pale little 'Oliver Twist' when he stood before the awful Mr. Bumble, but good bold cries of 'I want some more, mother, please; a good big piece!'

While the meal progresses we will look at the other side of the house, where there is placed a small three-legged table which holds a cup and saucer and a small plate of thin bread and butter. The eldest boy declares the whole plateful is *not one good bite.* This table is close by the easy-chair that is so carefully put out of a draught, and has a nice cushion at the back. In this chair sits Jane's mother, and on this cushion rests her dear gray head.

Yes! This is grandmother, whom the children love with all their heart and soul. She is eighty years of age, of tall and slim figure; and although so old, her face is smooth and her complexion clear. Her gray hair is tucked under a cap that is drawn by a narrow cord, and forms what fulness there is in the border. A narrow white ribbon ties it under

the chin. She is dressed in black; she has worn no other colour for many years; and she wears the plaid handkerchief which all maidens, wives and mothers in and about the valley of Llanroth consider it 'the thing' to do. Her Bible or Hymn-book is by her side; so is her knitting, for she prides herself on supplying the little ones with socks. There in her comfortable chair she sits, with the quiet, unconscious grace that is sometimes seen in persons who, like her, have lived long and passed meekly under the chastening hand of God. If she had only been dressed in velvets and lace, with satins and brocades covering her easy-chair, and chains of gold hanging about her neck, she would have looked as magnificent as the dowager-duchess at the Castle, on whose broad acres the cottages of the miners were chiefly built. These things, however, were not wanted to make Jane's mother what she was. She was a King's daughter, although she wore nothing but black stuff and a plaid flannel handkerchief.

Dear old grandmother Watkins! How many desponding Christians have been comforted by your gentle words! How many backsliders in heart brought to see themselves sinners by your faithful counsels! How many of God's own earnest workers built-up, strengthened, and sent on their way rejoicing by your bright example, we shall not know until we reach that place where our works 'do follow.' Owing to feeble health and old age, Mrs. Watkins had not for some time past been able to go to any place of worship, so, for her special benefit, a 'prayer-meeting' is held each alternate evening in John's house. She is blessed in her excellent daughter and her dearly-loved son-in-law, who has taken her as a special charge from God.

It was very beautiful to see the tie between the tall, strong miner and the feeble old saint whose feet waited to step on the shining shore. Words of comfort the strong man gave to the feeble woman, in return for the rich experience she unfolded to him. On one occasion a very happy time had been spent in conversation between the 'good old grandmother' and her son and daughter on the 'Promises.'

'There is one more in the Bible for you, mother,' John said, 'than there is for Jane and me. It says, "Thy Maker is thy Husband!"'

'So it does, my dear,' she replied, clasping her thin hands, and looking upwards with joy.

Another woman, soon to be also a widow, and nearer to John than even the dear old grandmother, was thankful to cleave to this oft-quoted text in after years, when the fair old face was sealed in eternal repose.

'For all His love to me here, I bless Him, John! But I shall be glad to go home when the time comes. I am not weary or complaining; how can I do so, when you are all so good to me? I am as happy as I can be; but I long to see the King in His beauty, and the land that I think cannot now be very far off. Besides, I have more in heaven than I have on earth, John. My poor dear husband has been there this many a year; and little Jonathan is there; and then there is my good lad Robert; he was killed so suddenly that there was no time for "testimony," but I know the life he led; I am sure he is there. And Tom, my bonny, curly-headed Tom; you know he died in my arms from the burns he got in the explosion, and the very last thing he said to me was, "Don't cry, mother; when we both get to heaven we shall never part!" That is another, and there were the twins—dear me! they were the

prettiest of all my children, and very young when their poor father went. I suppose, John, the blessed Lord knew what a struggle I should have to live; and how hard it would be for me to get them bread; so He took them, if you remember, both in one month. O dear! how hard it seemed then; how wise now! For nobody knows what their children will be. But there they are; and heaven is more like my proper home, you know.'

'But you have some left, mother,' said Jane, softly; 'we are here, to be with you.'

'I shall have you *there*, as well as the rest: we shall be an unbroken family in heaven, I believe,' she added with rapture.

One day a friend, a young lady, called to see Mrs. Watkins, and was sitting talking to the good old woman.

'Do you think,' asked the lady, 'you will know your relatives in heaven?'

'Did I know them here?' she said in amazement.

'Yes, of course you knew them here.'

'Then do you think I shall be blind in heaven, that I should not know my own husband and children, whom the Lord lent to me for so long? O dear, yes! I shall know them all. If I took this creaky old body with me to heaven, I might not, for I often forget people and their names; but, my dear lady, I shall leave this in the river. When I get home I shall have a youthful body, and clear memory and understanding. Know them? Yes, to be sure I shall know them.'

Seeing her visitor smile, the old woman said:

'I dare say it seems strange to hear me talk about being young again; but I *shall* be. Did you ever read in your Bible about an old angel or a lame angel?'

'No, dear Mrs. Watkins, never!' said the visitor.

'And you never will. But you have read of God sending angels on messages and errands?'

'Yes,' said the lady.

'Then you will remember how well all the angels knew the way, and exactly where they should find the people they were sent to.'

'I do remember,' she answered.

But glowing with her subject, the dear old lady went on.

'When God sent them into Sodom to find Lot, they knew whose hands to lay hold of, and who it was they were sent to help. Then you remember about Hagar, poor thing! when she was in the wilderness with her lad. There is the child dying for want of a drop of water, and she can do nothing but sit down and cry, and is giving up, when the angel calls out, "What aileth thee, Hagar?" You see, he knew all about her, her name and everything. And though Daniel was so deep down in the dark den where the lions were kept, the angel found him. I dare say, now, there were a good many dungeons, but the angel knew where Daniel was. And Peter, too, you know, Miss, was asleep one time between two keepers; an angel was sent to save and deliver him. Anybody like ourselves might have awakened the wrong man; but not the angel—bless you, he knew Peter, and took him to the place where he knew they were praying for him, and where they would be sure to take care of him when once he got to them. It was one of the angels that told Cornelius to send for Peter when he was anxious about his soul, and he told him exactly with whom he lodged, and where they would find the house. Then it is very blessed to know that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

So you see, Miss, they know each *one*. I like to think of that.'

'Pray excuse me, Mrs. Watkins; but *how* do you know that *you* will know them in heaven?

'Well, Miss, the Apostle says that as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly. And best of all, my dear Saviour Himself says we shall be EQUAL TO THE ANGELS. If Jesus says so, it must be so; and being so, I shall see and understand like the angels. I shall see my husband and my children. I hope I shall see you too, Miss.'

Rising from her seat she took her visitor's hand in both her own, and looking tenderly in the fair young face, asked, 'You are living for heaven, my dear.'

'I am trying, Mrs. Watkins.'

'Well, then, we are sure to meet there, and maybe we shall walk together in the golden streets and sit down on the banks of the river and join in the new song. And, O, best of all:

"There we shall see His face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in!"'





CHAPTER XVII.

THE WIDOW.

> 'The mother in her office holds the key
> Of the soul; and makes the being, who
> Would be a savage but for her gentle cares,
> A Christian man.'

THE venerable and excellent Mrs. Watkins had been left a widow very early in life, and had to provide with her own hands for her little ones. Leaving home early each morning, not returning until late in the evening, her life was hard; nevertheless, repose for her tired frame was not thought of until, with the fatherless children, she had sought help and guidance from Him Who has said, 'Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me.' The Sabbath was a special day of blessing to her, for on this day she could spend the whole of her time in the midst of her family, and instruct them according to the best of her ability. The Sunday-school had not at that time reached the country-place where they lived. She would hear them repeat their verses, and make them read aloud in turn from God's Book. A hymn was always sung, and after this the mother, with her heartfelt wants, took the children to Jesus. Sometimes the elder children were encouraged to say a word or two of prayer aloud, and then indeed the widow's heart sang for joy.

'Try to pray, my dear,' she whispered one day to one of them.

'I can't, mother,' the child replied in the same low voice; 'not aloud. I can't; it makes me cry. But I keep saying the words down in my heart. I think God sees down there. I feel as if He did.'

This was the Tom who died afterwards in his mother's arms from the effects of the burns he had received in an explosion.

Thus passed the earlier part of the widowhood of Mrs. Watkins. In the mean time her sons and daughters grew up, loving and serving God, with the exception of Davy, the oldest of the family.

This caused the mother's heart to ache and throb with anguish. David, of whom the dead father had said, 'Davy will soon grow up and take my place,'—Davy, who ought to have been the stay of the younger ones and the comfort of his widowed mother's life,—Davy, the first-born, so loved, so prized, so cared for,—was now the chief sorrow of his mother's already burdened heart; although he 'afterward repented' and gave himself up to God. Indeed, he was compelled to do it, for his mother never ceased to pray for him. His companions were godless drunkards: the young man himself often came home the worse for drink. Well-meaning friends told the widow that she did wrong to allow him to remain at home, and said that the door ought to be closed against him.

'You are not his mother,' she would reply. 'It is not possible for you to understand his case: it is between the Lord and myself. He will save him; I know He will.'

So she bore with him, doing all she could to make home attractive and pleasant to him. But she did more than this: she continually prayed for him.

Under all circumstances she prayed: if she sat in the house or walked by the way, she prayed for him; often the dark night through, her sobbing, aching heart went up to Him that 'heareth alway;' and her pillow was wet with tears as she cried, 'Save my son, O God!'

'Lord,' she sighed, 'Thou art pledged to save; Thou hast promised, and Thy word is "yea and amen" to them that believe, and I believe. I am waiting for Thy salvation, Father! Still waiting. As Thou wilt, how Thou wilt, only save! Thou hast said, "If ye believe." Lord, I believe. I hold to the promise. I will not give it up. I wait Thy time, my covenant-keeping God.'

One day a circumstance happened at the place where Davy was employed, that filled him with alarm. Instead of joining his companions as usual at the public-house, he went home early. His mother placed his tea before him with some pleasant words, but she soon noticed that he did not take any, and asked:

'What is amiss, Davy, that you don't eat?'

'Amiss!' he said; 'what should be amiss? No, thank you, I don't want any tea. I think I am a bit tired, that's all. But,' he continued, with hesitation, 'if you like, mother, I won't go out again to-night, and you can read to me, like you used when I was a lad. It's a long time since I heard any reading.'

'Do you mean, Davy,' his mother asked, while she steadied her voice, that would tremble a little in spite of all her efforts; 'Do you mean that I should read the Bible?'

He did not speak, but only nodded his head. The Bible was soon on the table: the mother selected one of the Old Testament histories as being likely to awaken his interest, but she stopped soon, fearing to

tire him; 'and if I do,' she thought, 'he may never ask me to read again.' Looking up, however, he said, 'Go on, mother.' She then commenced the history of the shepherd-warrior, and she had not read long before he looked with some of his old interest, and said:

'I remember that. That's the little chap that knocked the giant over like a nine-pin!' and he laughed aloud, but in a moment he said, 'Go on.'

Startled at this way of speaking of the great victory of her favourite David, after whom her son had been named, with the hope that he too would become 'a man after God's own heart,' she went on, and read for nearly an hour. Davy made no further remark, but after that night he stayed at home when his work was done, became better-tempered, and each evening, as soon as tea was over, would say, 'Now, mother!' Carefully and prayerfully she selected such portions of the Word as she considered best suited for him. Soon she began to read the sweet story of the Cross, quietly making such remarks as she hoped would help him to understand how much Jesus had done for him. But Davy made no sign until one glad evening she saw the tears fall from his eyes on to the white hearthstone over which he sat. She did not speak, but she prayed to the God of heaven.

'I don't know why I ask you to read to me, mother,' he said; 'I am sure it makes me downright miserable; but somehow I like it, for all that.'

'Ah, Davy, my lad, you should hear one of our preachers talk about the Bible,' she ventured to say. 'They make it so plain.'

'No, no; I am not going to turn Methodist,' said Davy.

But Davy was wrong in that as well as in many other things.



CHAPTER XVIII.

DAVY'S VISIT TO THE METHODIST CHAPEL.

'Not unto us! How sweet to join the strain,
In self-deliverance blissful and complete;
And all our toils, successes, failures, pain,
To lose, O Christ Jehovah, at Thy feet!'—TAYLOR.

STILL Davy's mother prayed for him. One Sabbath evening, as she was preparing to go to the service, she noticed that Davy had put his hat on, and stood with his hands in his pocket, whistling dolefully.

'Where are you going?' his mother enquired.

'O, I don't quite know; about a bit somewhere.'

'I suppose,' she said cautiously, 'you would not like to come with me to chapel,—just for to-night, —eh, Davy?'

He stood for a moment without lifting his head; presently he answered: 'Well, I don't care if I do, just this time. It's dark, no one will see me.'

'God will see you,' thought the mother, as her heart rose in gratitude to her covenant-keeping Saviour. 'Now then, my dear,' she said, 'are you ready?' And for the first time since he had thrown off the old home restraints, Davy walked by his mother's side to the house of God.

'You are very quiet, mother,' he said.

'I am very happy, my son,' she answered. 'It is so nice to have you walking with me.'

A sudden shame flushed his face as he saw how thoroughly selfish he had been; for from the time when the family had been dispersed to earn their own bread in various places, he had never walked with his mother to God's house. Now they reach the small, low building where his mother worshipped, and where he himself had knelt as a happy boy. They enter together, but Davy, instead of following his mother to the accustomed seat, slipped behind the door, and sat as close to the wall as he could



'Come with me to chapel, Davy.' *See p.* 131.

possibly get. But the Lord Who found Elijah in one of the dark caverns of Horeb, and cried, 'What doest thou here?' found Davy that night.

The preacher was young, earnest, and eloquent, and spoke in such a way as to arrest the attention of such an one as the man behind the chapel-door. As he spoke of the shameful ingratitude of sinners, *of their* wasted lives, of the dread account they would

have to give of all the mercies they had thrown away, and through which, he said, they had fought their way,—through the Saviour's love, the light of the Holy Spirit and of God's Word; 'and perhaps,' he added, 'through the prayers of pious friends. Some have praying fathers or mothers; how long have these prayed for you—how long?'

'That's me: he means me,' said stricken Davy, and he seemed to himself to shrink into less compass, and his cheeks burned. 'That's me. My mother has prayed for me for many a year, I know; but she should not have told that chap about me, either. I wish I could get out of here, but I can't. I feel sure the man's eyes are on me, although I am not looking at him.'

Davy is not the first who has felt like that under a faithful sermon, and will not be the last.

Contrary to her usual custom, Davy's mother did not stay to the prayer-meeting. 'I will go home with him,' she said. The young man seemed to expect her, and was waiting for her under the shadow on the opposite side of the way. When they reached the cottage, he closed the door, and said in an injured tone:

'Mother, I did not think you would have served me like that!'

'Like what, my lad?' she asked in real surprise.

'You should not have told that man in the pulpit about me.'

'Davy, my son,' said the good woman, as she looked him full in the face, 'did you ever know me tell a lie?'

'Never, mother,' he said; 'I wish I could say as much for myself.'

'Well, then, believe me when I te l you that I

never saw that man until to-night. He is the new preacher.'

Davy looked at her in amazement; at length he said: 'Well, it's very strange. I am sure all the people would see that he knew all about me. I never was so ashamed in my life.'

'Davy, my lad, it was the Lord showing you your own sinful likeness; but He'll change it, He'll make it like His own,' she said quietly.

'I don't know, mother, what it is, but I seemed to see us all kneeling down to pray as we used to do when we were little children. My picture was not so ugly then as I saw it to-night.'

And bold, reckless Davy trembled at the mental photograph.

'God can change it,' she said with broken voice, 'and make it even better than the little Davy before he went astray.'

What a wonderful imparter of courage grace is. Davy could not look his mother in the face when she first began to read the Bible to him. Now he lifted up his head, and said to his mother:

'I've been a bad man and a bad son. I hope you will forgive me, for I am very miserable.'

She turned round, and placing both arms about him, kissed him tenderly, while poor Davy laid his head on the faithful bosom and wept like a little child. Did she forgive him? Witness, O mother, when your returning son or daughter has said, 'Mother, forgive!' if all the love in the world could be pressed into one heart, would you not give it to them? Ah, yes! The robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf,—bring them all. 'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found'!

The next day Davy was grave and quiet, and especially kind to his mother. There was to be a

prayer-meeting in the same little chapel that night, she told him.

'I will go with you,' he said.

A great calm fell upon the widow's heart as she heard him say this. To Davy she said, 'I am very glad;' to her Saviour she said, 'Lord, I believe!'

Davy did not creep in that night. He knelt by his mother's side in penitence and humility. When the hymn had been sung, the same young man who had preached, led the meeting in prayer. The Lord of Hosts was there; the influence of the Holy Spirit rested on the people as one after another prayed: the place became a Bethel. And now Davy's mother opens her mouth to God, as her heart had been all the time. In her quiet voice she besought God for the one blessing she now craved. 'According to Thy promise, Lord,' she urged, 'take full possession now! Now, Lord, I wait!' Before this prayer of faith was ended, Davy, who would not a few hours since be seen going into a Methodist chapel, was seen with his hard hands clasped above his head, and was heard to cry aloud, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'

From that hour the widow's son became a 'new creature in Christ Jesus;' he joined himself to the people among whom he had found peace, and became a generous supporter of the cause of the blessed Lord.

'So you see,' the dear old woman would say when speaking of this time, 'the Lord saved his soul, and gave me back my child at the same time!'

But we left John's family at tea, and must return to them, for tea is now over. John sets down the little child he had on his knee, and looking at the clock, says, 'It is time to start, Jane.'

The good woman, with strict orders to the eldest girl to put the little ones to bed and not forget

grandmother's milk, prepares to go with her husband to the prayer-meeting, held in a neighbour's house some half-mile distant.

'We will pray for you, mother,' Jane says as she goes out. John says the same: the grandmother smiles, and says, 'Do, children, do; and thank you.'

But a prayer-meeting amongst the colliers must have a chapter to itself.





CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

'Prayer raises the soul to the portals of heaven,
Whence comfort and strength to the faithful are given;
It knocks and it waits, on Christ's promise it leans;
It seeks and it finds, it asks and obtains.'

WHEN John Roberts and his wife reached the place 'where prayer was wont to be made,' they found that several of the colliers, with their wives or sisters, were there before them. You would find it difficult to believe that these men were among the dark-faced, dusty men we saw going from the 'pit' the other day, so clean and decent are they now.

Sitting on a low three-legged stool, with his chin resting on his hand, is 'Tum,' the little man who, with our friend John, sang on his way home from work. Close beside him is a well-dressed, bright-eyed little man called Johnnie. This man walks two miles every Sunday to attend to a school of which he is Superintendent, as well as the teacher of the boys' class, and principal singer. During the week he usually goes the same distance twice, once to a prayer-meeting, as now, and once to the Class-meeting. To one or other of these meetings his wife generally goes with him.

There is another and a taller man who sits quietly reading from his hymn-book. His hands are hard

and knotted. Two of the fingers had been torn from his right hand in an accident some years since. A smile is on his homely face as he turns the leaves of his book, or inhales the fragrance of a lovely rose that he holds in his hand; for, like many of his class, he is fond of flower culture, and is especially proud of his roses. He, like Johnnie, is a Sunday-school teacher; in addition to this he is a Local-preacher, and a very happy Christian. It is a part of his duty to go down the 'pit' during the night to attend to the wants of the horses that are, as we have seen, stabled below for service on the tramways. His fellow-workmen say that they don't know whether he sings in his sleep or not, but they affirm that he goes down singing, goes about his work singing, and ascends the shaft singing.

But although he holds his hymn-book in his hand and smiles as he reads some of the songs of Sion, he is not singing now. He has that very day laid one of his children in the grave, a girl of seventeen. One of the women present speaks to him about her. In reply to what she has said, he tells her:

'Ay, it was consumption; but she made a good end of it. I was holding her on my knee while mother made her bed, and she says, "Father, sing for me, sing 'Rock of Ages.'" You know I was very full of trouble, and could not begin in a minute; but she started the tune herself, and sang until all the neighbours came under the window to hear her. We all tried to sing with her, but we could not make much out of it for crying. She sang it through herself, and then began, first one hymn, and then another, singing pieces of each, until the death-sweat came on her face. I may say she died singing, poor little wench; and whatever part of God's mansions she is in, I feel sure she is singing now.'

'Ay, ay!' said 'Tum,' looking into his friend's face; 'singing "unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us in His blood."'

'True, lad!' said John; 'she has learned the new song. She is somewhere amongst the hundred and forty-four thousand who were singing it when John heard about it in Patmos. That is where she is.'

'Yes,' quietly responded the father of the dead girl; 'she has gone where there is no death.'

Now another person comes in, rubbing his hands and smiling cheerfully. He is well dressed, and wears his shiny black hair cut close round his forehead. The boys say his wife puts a basin on his head, and cuts the hair by the rim of it. But that can hardly be, for he has no wife, and never had. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket, places it on the floor, and kneels on it to pray. During the short time he thus kneels, he unconsciously smooths his hair with one hand; in fact, except when 'Josey' is asleep or both his hands are occupied, he is found to be smoothing his hair or rubbing his palms together. He is an 'exhorter,' and gives addresses in the country places. Josey has many texts, but only one sermon; yet he manages somehow to make them fit.

A good man and liberal was Josey. His bachelor home was the 'Preacher's' home. The best bed, the easiest chair, and the best food it afforded, were at the Preacher's disposal; and many a young minister has carried from Josey's lonely home the means of enlarging his library. 'For you know you must have a bit of reading,' he would tell them, 'or else how can you get *ideas?*'

Two young lads are also there, serious beyond their years,—good lads, in training for the service of the Lord. Another boy, about sixteen, sits with them.

He, too, is in training for God; but his service is to be given in the celestial country, not here. He is anxious and careworn in appearance, as indeed he may well be, for he has a mother and 'five small children' to keep. One or two other men come in and take their seats in reverent silence.

Among the women is one called Mary. While the men were talking together of the girl who had died, she sat quietly wiping the tears from her eyes. There is a chastened look on her face; she is not comely and rosy, as are many of her countrywomen; her complexion is dark, her hair gray; she is stout and ungainly-looking. But Mary Jones is a blessing to the neighbourhood in which she lives. Her large heart and willing hand have endeared her to the wives and children of the workmen. If a mother is sick, or a child is ill, counsel is taken with Mary. If, as unfortunately often happens, men are brought home injured from the colliery, Mary knows exactly what to do, how to apply the soft cotton steeped in oil to the scorched flesh, or to bind up the torn or bruised limbs of the sufferers, so as to do until the doctor comes.

These same hands have closed the eyes of many who have died from the injuries received in their perilous work, have placed on the 'tenantless clay' the last dress, and helped to comfort the mourners when the 'vacant' hour came. Many stricken women have wept their sorrow less on Mary's bosom. Many little children have run to her in their grief with the terrible cry, 'Father has been killed in the pit!'

Mary had herself been sadly tried, and her true heart went out in helpful sympathy to those who were travelling the same weary way. Sorrow came to her early. When a young woman, she had one morning seen her husband leave his house a fine

strong fellow, of whom she was very proud; but before the night fell, she beheld him borne by four men towards his cottage home a charred, disfigured object. A sudden explosion of gas had taken place in the part of the mine where he was working, and burned not only the life, but nearly all resemblance to the human form, out of him and several other of the miners.

'But the Lord has never left me, Ma'am, never!' she said to a lady who took a good deal of interest in her; 'and He never will. I believe He never will. We never wanted bread when the children were little and could not help themselves. Every one was so good to us; and ladies gave me washing and cleaning to do: so we got on better than most women who are left like I was. Now the children all do for themselves, and I keep two or three lodgers, and work in the garden myself, and that makes a bit, and helps to feed the pig, and the pig helps the rent nicely. So I am very well off, you see, Ma'am; and the good Lord is sure to take care of me as long as I want anything.'

Just beside her is a very pale, sad-faced woman, who sits with a sleeping baby in her arms. Another, in passing to her seat, stoops and asks in a low voice, 'Is Richard drinking, Ann?' She looks up and tells her friend, 'Yes, all the week: he won't have a penny on Saturday night!'

Another woman is kneeling in a corner: she knelt the moment she came in, and will kneel until the meeting is over. She seems to have a heavy care of some kind, although she does not tell it. But a pretty, rosy-faced daughter of hers, who left home for a large town, is said to have 'gone wrong,' and dares not come home. That is the load the woman carries hidden in her own heart. Poor, poor mother!

A tall woman, dressed like one of the Society of Friends, now passes her on the way to her own seat; as she does so, she whispers, 'Try to trust Him, Sally.'

'I am trying,' is the low reply.

An old man who is lame sits in the corner of the fire-place. His eyes are shut, and his lips move in prayer as he sways his body backwards and forwards.

John and his wife shake hands with them all, and then, like the rest of them, kneel in silent prayer for a moment.





CHAPTER XX.

A WARRIOR TAKING HIS REST.

'To arms! The martial shout prolong!
Unfurl the flag again!
Give battle to the false and wrong
Christ needeth earnest men.'—DR. PUNSHON.

AS John rose from his knees he enquired, 'Has William been seen about yet?'

'Here he is,' said one of the boys, 'just coming over the stile.'

On hearing this the people settle themselves, and at once open their hymn-books at the thirty-seventh hymn.

'We are sure to have that to start,' they say to each other.

Smiling kindly, the man they looked for kneels reverently and prays with apparent fervour, though in silence. He is remarkable in appearance, with keen blue eyes, and dark curly hair, straight nose, firm mouth, and tall slight figure. 'His looks are in his favour,' the colliers say. His voice is strong and clear, capable of being modulated to any requirement. He is not a collier, but has a business in a town some few miles away. Once in six weeks he finds his way to the valley of Llanroth, to help the pious people in their meetings. Sometimes he

preaches to them; to-night, however, there is to be a prayer-meeting. As he entered the dwelling, there was silence; in a few moments he gives out the hymn which all have ready,—

> 'Jesus, the name high over all,
> In hell, or earth, or sky;
> Angels and men before it fall,
> And devils fear and fly!'

'Johnnie' at once commences the tune, and all join heartily in singing it. The tune has many a turn, the last two lines being repeated again and again; and the people, with closed eyes, sway their bodies to and fro as they sing.

'Kneel down,' says the clear voice of William, and he commences the opening prayer. And what a prayer that is! He entreats, for himself and the people present, pardon for the past, strength for the days to come, a clear acceptance with God, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Then there is the pleading with the Almighty for sinners, —'Lord, there are those in this valley, with whom we talk and walk and buy and sell, who are going the way of death. The sleep of sin is on them; they are the willing slaves of Satan, those for whom Christ died. For these we plead. Thou canst save, Lord! All things are possible to Thee. We go back in our minds to the time when Thou didst wonders in the land of Ham; when Thou didst rebuke the waters of the Red Sea, that Thine ancient people passed through as on dry ground. Thou hast for them stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, put to flight the armies of the aliens, and brought back to life those that were dead. Remembering what Thou hast done, gives us boldness to plead for sinners here. Father, Thou knowest that fiery trials and savage,

fierce temptations beset the men for whom we plead to-night. But thou canst turn all aside or give them strength to overcome if they will but come to Thee. O, bring them, Lord, these precious blood-bought souls! Lord, show them Calvary! Let them see the man Christ Jesus with the bruised head and pierced side. O, let their dark minds comprehend that the sacrifice is offered for them! Save, we beseech Thee, O God!'

Only those who have worshipped with these men can understand the warmth and fervour of the 'Amens' that are given at the end of the first prayer. John now brings to God in the arms of his strong faith, his family, his neighbours, the Society, the schools, and especially the ungodly colliers, his fellow-workmen.

'Saviour,' he cries, 'Thou knowest how much of wickedness there is amongst us; how little of the fear of the Lord before our eyes; and Thou knowest how every day we take our life in our hands and go down into the depths of the earth, not knowing whether we shall come up again or not. Save us, O Lord, and make us ready to die, so that sudden death may be to us only a quick entrance into eternal life; for, we bless Thee, we know it is only just the same distance to heaven from the bottom of the pit as it is from our beds.'

Then the old man in the corner blesses God that He saved him from the horrible pit and the miry clay; and entreats the merciful protection of God now that he is old and gray-headed. In great earnestness he prays God to save his lads; '*special*, Lord, those that are out of the way.' Tears fall thickly on the clasped hands as he *wrestles* for the wanderer,—'Him, Lord, that's gone over the sea.' Save for the sighs that go up to God for the old

man, there is silence. They all know that there is in that aged heart a sorrow that may not be touched by other hand than that of the Great Healer. William rises from his knees with his face saddened; the old collier's prayer is echoed in his heart. A sorrow like unto the old man's, hangs upon him and often bears him down like the weight of a millstone.

'Let us sing,' he says, with his voice not less clear, though lower:

> 'O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come;
> Our shelter from the stormy blast,
> And our eternal home!'

Now 'Tum' breathes out his soul in earnest, heartfelt supplication to Him that hears and answers prayer. And then one of the young lads thanks God for saving him when it was almost a 'gone case' with him. Another gives thanks that the Preacher's voice had reached him across the field, and that that song about 'free grace' had brought him to the Lord.

The boys seem to encourage each other, and the one with the mother and five children to keep prays for grace and strength to do his duty to them and to his God.

Another hymn is sung, when a woman calls upon God for the young people of the Society. Next the sad-faced woman, as she sits quietly swaying her sleeping babe on her knees, prays for herself, her children, and for her husband,—again and again for him. Ah, Richard! you would surely have blushed for yourself if you could have seen that weeping wife of yours! But Richard was even then 'drinking himself drunk' at the 'Red Lion.' And now the 'woman' dressed as a friend, looking at the leader of the meeting, says:

'I wish to speak a word. I believe to-night God has wrought a great deliverance for me, and I think I ought to tell you.'

'Go on, sister Thomas, we shall be glad to hear.'

'Sister Thomas' then tells, quietly and thankfully, how, in crossing the Park, she was alarmed by a bull which rushed towards her furiously, but which, as she commended herself to God, suddenly changed its course when it had come within a few yards of the place where she stood, and disappeared amongst the trees.

There is an exclamation of thankfulness from all present, and a few well-timed and judicious remarks from William, on God's preserving providence; and again prayer and praise go on until the time when the little assembly is to break up. Then there is the usual old-fashioned shaking of hands, and farewells are said, ere they depart and take the way to their homes. Some have three miles to go, others less; most of them have to be up and at their work very early next morning; but notwithstanding, they are thankful to be able to go again and again in the hope of obtaining a blessing to their souls.

'William' has some four miles to walk before he can reach his home, but that is no uncommon thing for him.

We may pause here a moment to give our readers an account of the close of this good man's life. He has laboured for God for more than thirty years; 'many arise and call him blessed:' and in the end that God permitted him to be the honoured instrument in His hands of bringing many souls to Christ. But at last the stout heart gave way, the strong will can do little more even for the Master he loves so well. He had been confined to his house, chiefly to his bed, for nearly a month, when one

Saturday afternoon he asked his daughter to give him his Plan; 'for, I think,' he said, 'I have an appointment to-morrow at ——.'

The young woman did as requested, and as she gave the Plan into his hands, said:

'Yes, father, you are planned at ——. Who shall you get to go for you?'

'No one!' said the almost dying man. 'I am going myself!'

'That is quite impossible, father; you could never walk so far, or get over the stiles.'

'If I live and can get up,' he said, 'I shall go. Do not attempt to hinder me. I *shall* go; it will be my last service for God.'

The Sabbath morning dawns, and beholds him, with the aid of a friend's arm, on his way to the appointment. Many prayers follow the slow footsteps of the old Preacher that day. He reaches the place in safety; his friend commences the meeting for him while he rests a little while. The prayer he offers himself. 'Surely,' said an aged man afterwards, 'surely he is ripening for glory; he seemed to talk to God face to face as a man talketh with his friend. There was scarce a cloud between!'

William reads as his text the words of the prophet, 'Who hath believed our report?' His voice is low, but as clear as ever, when, in his usual forcible manner, he speaks of the first great meaning of the words, and at the end of his discourse brought them down to that moment.

'It is more than ten years,' he said, 'since I first came to you with a message from God. You had had others, but I want you to go back to that time when I told you that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to save you from the second death. Many times since have you had offers of

mercy. To-day I want to ask you, as in the presence of a holy, heart-searching God, "Who hath believed our report?"'

He paused, and held his trembling hand toward the people.

'Who?' he again asked, 'who? I shall never,' he continued slowly, 'speak to you again; I feel that my days are numbered. I speak to you as from the side of an open grave, and beg you to consider your ways. If there is anything wrong; if your hearts are not right before God; if you feel that you have not received the report which God's servants have from time to time brought to you,—repent, and give yourselves to Him that is mighty to save!'

The rough miners are alarmed; there is a breaking down before God. The results of that last 'service for God' are not to be told here. The tired soldier was seen amongst them no more. Within a fortnight, the green sod was placed over the grave where his friends had laid him, 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life.'





CHAPTER XXI.

THE EXPLOSION.

'In such an hour as ye think not.'

'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?'

IT is a hot, heavy day, with black clouds overhanging the valleys and covering the tops of the hills. There is no fresh breeze to fan the heated face. The cattle seek the shade, or stand in the brooks lazily flapping their sides.

'I am sorry it is such a sultry day,' said Mr. Cadwallador, 'I wanted you to have gone with your aunt and myself to see a pretty waterfall a little distance from here; but it is too hot to walk, and there is only a foot-path or we would have driven.'

'It is much too hot to think of walking, John,' said his wife. 'But we can go there another day. You have several days yet, Harry, have you not?'

'Yes, aunt; nearly a week.'

'Well, then, suppose you take us to see the ruined abbey, John. It's a beautiful drive there, and the abbey is very full of interest.'

'That is what we will do, Eliza. We will go quietly, so as not to distress the horse. Be ready as soon as you can.'

In due course the drive was taken, the abbey inspected, and our friends were on the way home. Mr. Cadwallador had once or twice remarked that

it would be 'rather thick underground, for the atmosphere was heavy.'

'Will it affect the colliery at all?' asked Harry.

'It often does,' his uncle replied, 'seriously, too; but Mr. Arkwright is very careful; he will see to airways, and all needful things.'

Talking pleasantly together they come nearer home.

It will be remembered that the miner who turned into the 'Blue Anchor' after a conversation with a fellow workman in which he had expressed a strong desire to inflict personal chastisement on John Roberts, was one of those strangely wicked men who cannot endure to see goodness in others, while they themselves are too indolent to try to be either good or great. It was well known that this man was no friend of John's, and that if he dared he would do more than speak of his unaccountable ill-will. In his usual spiteful manner, he this morning hailed him as a sneaking Methodist. That, however, was the name Ned gave to all who did not live as he did. If he saw, as he often did, respectable men with their wives and families going to the village church, with their cherished books of 'Common Prayer' in their hands, he invariably spoke of them as 'sneaking Methodists.' Independents, Wesleyans, Primitives, were all alike hateful in his sight. Ned was wickedly ignorant, and ignorantly wicked.

This particular morning some one had remonstrated with him on his spiteful way of speaking about pious people. It was, however, in vain; and the honest fellow who wished only to do Ned good, had turned away with a hopeless face. Joining some of his fellow workmen on their way to the pit, he said:

'There can be nothing done with such a man. It

is very hard to bear with him. What do you think, John?'

John was walking silently, his head thrown back, his face looking upwards.

Again his fellow workman put the question to him, 'What do you think?'

'I think we must follow Scripture,' he answered slowly.

'How is that?' another enquires.

In very earnest tones, John repeated the words of the Lord Jesus: 'Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.'

'But, John, can you forgive that man who never lets you alone? Can you pray for him?'

'Do you think I want to shut the gates of heaven against myself?' he asked. 'Does not the Lord say in the Holy Book, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses?"'

There was silence as the words of Jesus fell on the ears of the men. Presently one said:

'But you will want a lot of God's grace before you can do that.'

'He that says you must do it, will give you all the grace you require for the task. Ay! and make it a deal easier to forgive than to bear malice,' said honest John. 'I have found it out.'

As the men reach the works, they find that Mr. Arkwright has been down the pit, although so early in the day. Some of them notice that he looks anxious as he bids them be very careful with their lamps, 'for it is a heavy day.'

'I think there will be a thunderstorm shortly, and that will make it better, I dare say. Any way,' he continued, 'take care.'

On this same morning, John Roberts had

left his dear home more reluctantly than ever before. He stood for a moment talking with his wife, then he knelt to pat the rosy cheeks of his little child; for another instant he stood by the grandmother's side, said a kindly word to her, and then stepped forward to go out. As he crossed the threshold he turned yet again and bade them 'good-bye.' On his way down the narrow flower-bordered garden walk, his wife heard him say, with his face turned heavenward, 'Lord, help me!' These were the last words she ever heard him speak. Impressed by his manner, she wondered if anything troubled him, and why he did not go singing as usual down the field. Walking to the garden-gate, she stood watching him, until she saw him lift his hands in mute appeal towards the heavy, clouded sky, then she returned to her house comforted.

'He is praying for somebody,' she said. 'How stupid I am not to have thought of that before. I wonder if it is Ned. I wish that man would go out of the place; he is very bad to John. But he said, "Lord, help *me!*" as he went. I wonder he did not tell me about it. Poor John!'

On her return to the cottage, addressing her mother, she said:

'We must pray for John. There is something the matter with him, mother; we must take him to the mercy-seat to-day.'

'Yes, Jane, I saw that he had something on his mind.' Pausing a moment, the old mother resumed: 'Whatever it is, or whoever it is that is troubling John, he is supported by the "Everlasting Arms." Our John is in good hands.'

Ere the night fell on the Llanroth valley, many blessed God for the consistent life of their friend and fellow workman, John.

The men are gathering in large numbers about the pit-bank. The cage runs up and down many times with its living freight. Cheerfully, many of them singing snatches of songs or hymns, the men are taken down the dark, damp shaft. Down went John; down went 'Tum;' down went the two lads we saw at the prayer-meeting; down went the boy with the mother and five small children; and down, too, went the bold, blaspheming Ned. All reach the gloomy mine in safety; the lamps are carefully examined by the man appointed for the task. Each man knows his work and the way to it perfectly. By the glow-worm light of the Davy they take their way, not able to stand upright; now bending low, and now very nearly crawling to get to their appointed tasks. Our friends, with Ned, who works in the same place, walk forward like the rest, and are soon busily engaged in the usual routine of the mine. Some bring down the coals, others fill the wagons, others push the wagons forward to where the drivers with their horses can take them from them; and although the air is just a little heavy, there is no reason for any uneasiness on the part of the workers. So they work on, when in a moment, as sudden as the lightning's flash, the eyes of the men are blinded by a *flame of fire,* their ears are deafened by a noise as of a thousand peals of thunder. The poor fellows know only too well what it means. There is an explosion! Happy are they who escape with life; happy are they who preserve their sight in this terrible fire; happy are they who can use their feet, and so fly for their lives! All who can, make for one place, towards the 'pit's eye,' where the fresh air still comes pouring down.

The explosion has happened in the place where John and the party of men and boys who went



down with him, worked. And although it was a mere trifle in comparison with many similar calamities, it has torn down all the props, broken the timbers, and displaced the roof. The deadly gas is making its way wherever the doors and brattices are torn away. It is indeed an awful moment!

'Thank God for spared lives!' cries one old man who has been in more than one deadly peril before this. 'Aye, thank God,' cry many as they pant for breath.

'Mates, are we all here?' asks John Roberts, who had escaped uninjured; and count of their number is instantly taken.

'Tum' is found to be badly burned; his face is scorched, his whiskers, eyelashes, and hair all burned away. His ears are blistered, and so are the backs

of his hands, while his arms are cut and bleeding. Several others are in a similar condition. One of the boys has fainted; the other, supposing him to be dead, weeps piteously as he calls on God to help *him*, and if it be His holy will, to spare his life. In less time than it takes to put these words on paper, all this passes, and it is discovered that two of their number are missing.

'Who are they?' John eagerly enquires.

'Ned, and a boy!'

For a moment there is silence as deep as the grave itself. A look of horror comes to John's begrimed face as he cries in anguished voice: 'Ned! and, O my Father in heaven, he is not ready to die! I know where to find him. Lads, pray for me; I'll save him if I can! Lord, help me!' he cried.

As he sped along, he pressed the woollen scarf, which he had hastily tied about his throat, to his mouth and nostrils, to keep as much as possible the foul air from his chest and lungs. His comrades hear his muffled words of prayer as they lose sight of him in the awful gloom. Save for the sobbing prayers of the men, no word is spoken; seconds seem hours, and hours seem days, in the dread uncertainty of the perilous journey this brave fellow has taken; although it is really a very short time since they saw him enter the fatal passage.

It is the valley of the shadow of death into which John has willingly and prayerfully entered, to do battle with the 'Rider of the White Horse.' Nay, John means more than simply to save the life of a man, though that were a noble deed, and one which deserved the highest meed of praise that the world could give. It is for *an immortal soul*

that brave John defies the deadly gas. 'For,' said he, 'he is not ready to die!' Every man on the spot knows that; and with bated breath they watch the passage from which this real hero must come,—if he come at all. Some of them lift their lamps, thinking they hear his footsteps. In an instant it is seen that he is near to the entrance of the passage, and that he bears in his arms, and partly across his shoulders, the form of the insensible Ned. A shout of joy greets John, which dies in a piteous wail when they see him stagger and reel as a drunken man; yet he still clings to his burden. He seems to measure the distance he has to go before he can give it up. Another instant, and many ready hands are near to relieve him. With a great effort he lifts and places the limp, helpless Ned in the arms of the men now close to him, straightway himself gasps for breath, gropes with his hands, reels, staggers, tries to keep his feet; and though many are there to help and if possible save him, poor John,—nay, not poor; but brave, noble, self-sacrificing John!—falls forward on his face DEAD!

Like the Master he loved so well, he gave his life for his enemy!

When this is seen, no man dared venture into that deadly gas whose noxious influence had overcome their fellow-workmen, no, not though it had become known that the boy still in the place where Death reigned was the boy with the 'mother and five children' to keep! There could be no hope for him then; he was further in the place than Ned had been.

John used to say it was just as near to God from the bottom of a coal-pit as from anywhere else. So the brave fellow and the widow's son took the journey together,—'Upward, Onward, Heaven-



The Rescue.

ward!' Only the dead bodies of the man and boy were left; that was all; for the welcome words, 'Well done!' had doubtless greeted their ransomed souls before the lifeless bodies had been carried away.



CHAPTER XXII.

BRINGING UP THE DEAD.

'The burning bush was not consumed
Whilst God remained there;
The Three, while Jesus made the Fourth,
Found fire as soft as air.

God's furnace doth in Sion stand;
But Sion's God sits by,
As the refiner views his gold
With an observant eye.

'His thoughts are His, His love is wise,
His wounds a cure intend;
And though He does not alway smile,
He loves unto the end!'

THE tidings of the accident spread quickly through the valley and over the hill-side. The swiftest of foot are dispatched for help, and within a comparatively short space of time three doctors are present. Bands of men are on the pit-bank, anxious to render any aid they can; the cry among them is, 'Send me.' The number of persons now gathered together is very great, for most of the people have friends engaged in the colliery, and all are anxious.

Just when the excitement is at its height, Mr. Cadwallador, with his wife and visitors, are seen to be driving rapidly towards the works, that lie not many yards from the highway over which they must pass in order to reach that gentleman's house. He is seen to be standing up in the wagonette. When they reach the scene of the accident, he leaps

from his carriage and crushes through the fence. Then, as if remembering that there were most likely injured men to be seen, he bade his wife drive home quickly, and bring with her in the carriage such things as would be likely to be wanted.

'You,' he said, addressing Mr. Osbourn and his wife, 'had better not return; there is, I fear, something very serious the matter.'

Mrs. Cadwallador shook the reins, and the horse went swiftly forward.

One of the colliers ran to meet the master that he might explain the presence of the people there.

'An explosion, Sir,' he said, breathlessly. 'Not so very bad, but there is sure to be some dead. I think there is somebody to be brought up soon. The joiner has a board and some straw ready to carry them away.'

'Where is Mr. Arkwright?'

'He is down, Sir, just now. He came up to tell us what to do, and went down again. He had only been out of the pit half-an-hour when it fired this morning.'

At the pit-bank the signal had been given that the cage was about to come up. It is understood that some of the injured are to be brought to bank. A solemn silence is preserved amongst these rough men, for they know not who is to come It might be one very dear to some standing there.

The wheels at the top of the headstocks revolve, the stout rope passes over them, and at length the cage rises slowly from the shaft and is secured. The crowd falls back in obedience to Mr. Cadwallador's orders. It is now seen that Mr. Arkwright holds up the head of one whom several are keeping in their strong arms. When they move for the purpose of lifting the helpless being from the cage to the litter mentioned by the workman to Mr.

Cadwallador, it is seen that the miserable form is that of Ned.

A gray-haired gentleman, one of the three doctors, lays his finger on Ned's wrist, put his hand over the heart, kneels at his side, and baring the strong but now helpless arm, with his lancet pierces a vein. A few sluggish blood-drops follow.

'He will come round,' the gentleman says; 'carry him away. Barnet,' he continues to a younger man, 'do you see to him; keep him as quiet as you can. There will be some trouble with him when he begins to recover consciousness. Keep a few strong men with you. You know as well as I do how to treat him.'

Ned was saved! Hands more kindly than his own conveyed him to his home: he was carefully attended, and in a short time was able to sit up in his bed and converse with his friends.

When he was told how he had been saved and at what cost, he said with an oath, 'It was a narrow shave for me. I wish somebody else had got me out, though, and not that sneaking Methodist!'

No word of gratitude to God,no sorrow for the ill-will he had borne to the man who gave his life for him; no, not one! If this were a story of the imagination, it would probably be said that this proved the turning-point in Ned's life, and he became a better man. But it is a *true* history; and sad to say, Ned was as great a reprobate after this time as before.

But to return to the colliery. Once more the wheels revolve; the rope strains and tightens. There is the same silence, the same fear on the faces, the same heart-whisper, 'Who is it that is being brought up now?'

The cage rises very slowly; it is secured. A group of men who have been in a circle round 'something,' move sadly away. Then a sight to make the

stoutest weep. 'Tum,' with his burned and still bleeding arms, is holding to his bosom the lifeless body of his friend and brother, John!

A cry of pity burst from the crowd of men as 'Tum' even then reluctantly gave up to the willing hands stretched forth to help, the dear, true friend whom he had begged the manager to let him hold on the way up the shaft.

'Tum' shivered like a man with ague as he saw John's head fall back and the stalwart limbs lie helplessly still. He leaned his head on a plank, and wept bitterly for the kind and strong hand that would never more help friend or enemy.

'Now, "Tum," my good lad, drink this,' said Mr. Cadwallador, pressing upon him the can of tea which Harry Osbourn had brought from the shed where Mrs. Cadwallador and Pansy had stationed themselves with such things as the elder lady knew would be likely to be wanted.

'Now, now, my lad,' he said kindly, 'don't do that; try not!' But the poor man's teeth would rattle against the side of the tin vessel that held the beverage he so gratefully drank. 'Some of you take Tum home,' Mr. Cadwallador said to the men next him. But Tum was resolute in staying to know 'if there was any chance for John.' The gray-haired gentleman who had up to this moment knelt by John's side, now arose, and letting fall the hand he had been holding, said very sadly, 'He is quite dead; there is not a spark of life in him. The sooner he can be taken away from here, the better. Have you any idea, Mr. Cadwallador, how long it may be before they reach the lad?'

'I have just been down, doctor,' Mr. Arkwright says; 'they hope to reach him soon; but he lies under a deal of coal, and the air is still very bad in the place. The men are taking turns in removing

timbers and coals; they cannot stay long at a time in such a place, you know; but they are hard at it, though I am afraid it is too late to save him.'

'There cannot be the slightest hope,' said the doctor. 'If he is not crushed to death, the gas must have killed him, as it has done the other poor fellow, who, they tell me, has given his life for as great a scamp as ever lived.'

At this moment there is a cry of 'Here is his poor wife!' And so it was. News of an accident had reached her home. Not knowing, but fearing that something fearful had happened, she knelt for a moment by the side of her mother, and trembling in every limb, said, 'Mother, there is something amiss at the pit!'

A sudden fear filled the breast of the aged woman. John's manner as he left his home that morning, the raised hands, the heaven-turned face, the prayer for help,—all came back to her. Was John seeking special help for special trial? or was his Lord whispering to him, 'This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise?' 'Jane,' she said, calling her daughter to her side again, 'come to me.'

'Yes, mother; I am only just putting some things to the fire. If the water has broken in, John may be very wet, you know.'

Poor thing! her heart fainted within her as she spoke, and thought how many were hurt in one way or another; how many were killed; and that all were in equal danger in the pit. Perhaps John might be hurt, perhaps—— But, O no! Heaven forbid; not that! O no, no! So, steadying her voice, she said, 'What do you want, mother?'

'Don't tremble so, my child,' said the dear old soul, 'don't. Go quietly to the pits, Jane; and remember what your husband is;' then, in a low, tender voice, 'perhaps *was*. Don't start so, Jane,

my dear. Only try to remember that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Do you hear me, Jane?'

'Yes, mother; I am trying to think. And now I am going; pray for me all the time until you know, mother.'

The thing she feared filled her with dread, fight against it as she would. While she hastened down the meadow, she once cried aloud, 'John, John!' She was startled as the echo took up the mournful cry and gave back the words, 'John, John!' Before she reached the works, she had learned that there had been an explosion, and that John was '*hurt.*' If she had not been so informed, the sad looks of the bystanders would have told her that. They fall back quietly that she may pass to where her husband lies; her heart stands still within her as her strained ear catches the words of the doctor, '*Quite dead!*'

In an instant, with a low moan, she is on her knees by her dead husband's side, lays her hand on his heart, puts her ear down to his chest, sets her fingers on his wrist, lifts to her knee the arm that bears the mark of the surgeon's lancet, but which no one blood-drop followed! With both hands she tries to induce circulation, but in vain. The silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher is broken at the fountain. The spirit hath returned to God Who gave it.

At length the gray-haired surgeon touches her gently on her shoulder, and offers both his hands to raise her from the ground. He understands her mute, appealing face, and says: 'No, my good woman, none of us, not even yourself, can do anything for him. The brave fellow has finished his course. Don't fret, he was a good man!'

At the sight of Mrs. Cadwallador, who at this moment heard of the poor wife's coming, Jane burst into a flood of tears.

'That's right,' the doctor says; 'let her weep.'

Weep? Yes, let her weep! It is all she can do just now!

Once more she falls on her knees by her husband's side, kisses his white lips again and again, and bathes his dead face with her tears. Then with clasped hands she looks heavenwards, saying aloud:

'I shall see thee again, my husband, my dear! Not lost, not lost, but gone before! O John, John! my dear, good husband!'

'Come, my poor Jane, come away,' Mrs. Cadwallador says kindly, 'come away!'

'Yes, ma'am,' she answered, meekly; 'yes, I will go. Some of you please bring my husband home.'

The rude litter which had conveyed Ned to his home is brought, and the dead man is placed on it in silence. In silence the poor widow walks by his side 'like one stupefied,' until they enter the field leading up to the pretty cottage home. As she catches sight of its white walls, her loss comes to mind with greater force, and she cries out, 'Can it be that he is dead?' In the same mournful tones the echo repeats, 'Is dead!'

The sad news has reached the desolated home before them, and the poor old mother is seen at the garden gate, resting her trembling hands on the stone post.

The garden gateway is narrow, and there is a little delay in preparing to carry the melancholy burden through. In this interval the coarse covering is lifted from the face of the dead, and the mother, whom John loved so well, stooped and kissed him tenderly. Stroking and patting the cold cheek, she said:

'Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!'

A friendly neighbour helps her into the cottage, where the newly-made widow is weeping sadly among her children.

'Don't cry so, mother,' the eldest boy is saying; 'we shall go to him, you know.'

But O! how the poor boy cries himself as he tries to comfort her, for the dear dead father who lies so still in the chamber above. The old mother rocks herself to and fro in her easy-chair, whispering quietly to Him that heareth in secret.

'No cry, mamma; daddy 'll tum home soon,' the little one tells her, and with her pinafore tries to dry her mother's tears.

Mother's posies grow in the trim garden; the tall clock ticks by the wall; the birds will come to the door in the morning to be fed as before; the sun will rise on the morrow, and the evening will see the stars aglow, and the moon shedding its soft light upon the earth; and all things will continue as they were, in the outer world:—but in this once happy home there is sorrow, lamentation, and woe; men pass and re-pass the cottage in silence; the echo itself is still, for no sound to-day provokes a reply. The shadow of death is there!

Friends are good, though at times mistaken. Poor Jane has never read Shakespeare; but it seems to her that the attempts which are made by the simple cottar folks to comfort her are but 'Whirling words.' Jane never heard of Tennyson; but she weeps

'For the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!'

So wept England's Royal widow when death crossed the threshold of the palace, and carried away the lover of her youth and her heart's best earthly stay in riper years. So weep all they whom death has robbed, be they clothed in the garb of common life or in purple and fine linen!



CHAPTER XXIII.

YET ANOTHER SORROW.

'Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow!'

THE number of persons gathered on the pit-bank and about the road is even greater than at first. For it is now well known that the young lad whom the men are endeavouring to dig out of the ruin below, was the widow's son, and the sole support of his family.

Mrs. Osbourn has been taken away by her aunt, for no further help can be given there. Mrs. Arkwright, too, having assured herself that her husband is in safety, leaves him at his post, dangerous though it may be, and returns to her home and children, blessing God that she has been spared the terrible trial that has fallen on her neighbours.

A number of women have gathered in a comparatively quiet place. These are standing round another, who, with five little girls at her knees, looks helplessly about her, but does not speak. The children are weeping bitterly; their sobs and cries have reached the gray-haired doctor as he walks thoughtfully up and down, or speaks in a low voice to Mr. Cadwallador and Harry Osbourn. This gentleman

carefully avoids the place where that sad group is stationed.

'I am used,' he says, 'to very terrible sights; but that woman's face is the most fearful thing I ever saw. She seems turned to stone. She has sat there for hours without stirring, scarcely speaking, and has never shed a tear. It breaks my heart to see her. I wish she could cry; if she does not break down, she will surely lose her senses.'

Pity her, all ye that pass by! This woman with the white face, the stony eyes, and the parched lips, is the mother of the brave little collier lad who lies, a bruised and shapeless mass, at the bottom of the mine!

'I wish you would come away, Betsy! you had far better come, indeed you had,' one of the women says, in a quiet, soothing way.

'Yes, do!' another begs; 'you know he cannot be alive, poor lad! If you could do any good, you might stay. But the doctor says he is sure to be dead, and must have been so for hours and hours.'

With a gesture of impatience she answers almost fiercely, 'Dead or alive, I will not stir from this place until I have seen him. They would not let me see my poor Joe when he was killed, but see my lad I WILL! Tell me when they bring him up.' And again she settles into the same stony despair.

Harry Osbourn speaks to one of the women, who curtseys and nods her head as she places the piece of silver he has given her in her pocket; then she coaxes away the children from the poor woman's side, takes them to her own home, and feeds and comforts them as well as she is able. She afterwards leaves the four youngest in charge of her daughter, and with the eldest returns to the pit-bank, carrying some tea for the mother, who takes the cup and

swallows the contents eagerly, but without any remark. The signal is given from below. There may be some message which will relieve the general suspense. The man at the lever puts on steam; the rope again runs round the drum, and the cage yet once again brings up a 'something' that will cause many hearts to ache, and throb with sorrow. Three men hold a large bundle in their arms. Mr. Arkwright is with them, and steps from the cage first.

'Dead, of course,' the gray-haired doctor says very quietly, for he sees the mother of the dead boy making her way to the place.

'Crushed to bits,' the manager answers in the same tone; then in a lower voice to the men, 'Don't let his mother come.'

'But I *will* come,' she cries; 'he is my boy. Who will hinder me? I will see him, dead or alive.'

Strong men are powerless before her desperation. Mr. Arkwright goes up to her, places both his hands on her shoulders, and looking her full in the face, says very quietly: 'Betsy, you don't know what you are doing. Think of your poor Will for the future as you saw him go out of the house this morning.'

The poor creature knew at once that she should not see her son's face any more in this life. All the strong feeling that had held her up now suddenly forsook her; she spread her hands towards heaven, and uttering a loud cry, sank senseless at his feet.

'That is better; heaven help her!' the doctor says. 'Now some of you women take her away, and bring her little children to her as quickly as you can.'

She did not ask to see her boy again.

It is found that a cart will be required to convey the remains of the lad home; the litter that had conveyed both Ned and John to their houses, will not suffice for the younger man. So strong men lift

all together, and place it in the heavy vehicle that rolls away with its melancholy burden: and for the time the tragedy is played out at the Llanroth colliery: the people begin to go away; the engine is in constant use all day; men and boys are busy re-repairing the damaged workings, or in their own particular place performing their daily labour.

'For men must work, and women must weep!'

Many persons go to look upon the 'scene of the accident;' but there is nothing to be seen that bears any indication of the sad things done by the 'destroyer' in the mine. The cuts, burns, and other injuries of the men who so providentially escaped, are pretty soon healed; and within a short time these hardy sons of toil are again to be seen descending the dark, damp shaft into the depths beneath, whence they bring the means of life for themselves and families.

There is one, however, who has received a wound that will never heal again! It is the mother of the lost boy. Who can heal *her* broken heart, but God only?

As is usual amongst the collier folks, they begin to ask each other, 'What has the widowed mother in the house?' So one will carry a large loaf; another, a piece of bacon; a third will bring tea and sugar; the next, a basket filled with vegetables, or eggs; another is baking, so thinks the children could eat some pie. Mrs. Cadwallador has sent a woman to be in the house, to see to the poor boy, and to do all needful things. So that, save for the one terrible thing, the woman and her children are for the time in pretty easy circumstances. But she as yet sees 'no hope, no help, no cure' for her dreadful loss. A second time for her is the 'staff of bread broken!'



CHAPTER XXIV.

TWO FUNERALS.

'Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thy arms, turn to thy rest!'—TENNYSON.

A FEW days pass: there are two open graves in the churchyard. John and the boy are to lie side by side in their quiet resting-place, just under the shadow of some venerable yew-trees.

As the time appointed for the interment draws near, hundreds of persons gather about the roads and about the ancient church gates. As the procession is seen to approach the sacred edifice, they divide themselves and stand on each side of the way to allow it to pass through the vast crowd of sympathizing friends.

The funeral of the elder man will be first. More than a hundred colliers, decently dressed, walk in front, four abreast. One of their number leads them in singing:

'And am I only born to die
And lay this body down?
And must my trembling spirit fly
Into a world unknown?
A land of deepest shade,
Unpierced by human thought,
The dreary regions of the dead,
Where all things are forgot?'

This is sung in slow and solemn manner as they pass along. Next is the coffin, laid on a bier and borne by some of John's old friends. A black pall covers the coffin, and falls over the head and shoulders of the bearers in dark and sombre folds.

Close to the coffin follow John's widow and his nine children. The eldest son walks with and supports the trembling steps of his mother. The others come in order as they are placed, while a good neighbour carries the little one in her arms.

The dear old mother is too infirm to undertake the long walk to the churchyard, so she sits at home, tremblingly asking for what wise and mysterious purpose the Judge of all the earth has taken a 'Cedar of Lebanon' from the Church and the world, and left a withered branch like herself, that has been hanging loose for so many years. Grandmother Watkins, with all her years, is not the person to sit and droop or repine at the will of her Father in heaven; yet she wonders at the events of the last few days. As she for the last time kissed the lips of her dearly-loved son-in-law, and saw the wife, or rather the widow, with the children weeping as they passed down the green field, she tried to repeat the words she had so often given to others, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Why was it that the words did not give her the same comfort? She said they did not seem to 'settle her heart to-day, somehow.' So she asked, 'Why, O my Father?'

The reason why God had permitted this sorrow was not revealed to her. That was known to God alone. But He gave grace to bear the bitter trouble. As the aged saint mused, God, by His holy and blessed Spirit, applied to her heart the words of the Psalmist, 'Wait on the Lord; be of good courage,

and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.'

To return to the funeral procession. Next to the children walk a few relatives of the dead man; while close behind is carried the coffin that holds all that is mortal of the widow's son. This is not, as in the case of the elder man, laid on a bier, but is carried by four boys of his own age. Each wears white drapery round his hat, and the pall that covers the coffin has a double row of white silk all round its border. This is usual in Llanroth when the person to be laid in the grave is *unmarried.*

The widowed mother, now happily in tears, with her little girls, comes next. A few relatives follow, then the men who were in the pit on the morning of the explosion. Here is 'Tum,' badly injured though he was; his head and brow are bandaged; a wide-awake hat is drawn as far as possible over the face, and both arms are slung to his sides. But his step is firm, and a few weeks will see 'Tum' back at his work. But never more will he meet with a friend like John Roberts; sorely will he miss him when he returns to the mine and engages in the daily task.

A very long line of men and women follow, all the latter carrying flowers gathered from the pretty gardens to lay on the graves when they shall be made up. The men have mostly a piece of rosemary or southern-wood placed in the button-hole of the coat.

A large company! Like the Jews who sought to comfort the sisters of Bethany, and the people of the city who accompanied her of Nain, as she wept over her dead son before she met with Jesus. All these people were here to testify their love for the dead, and their sympathy with those who mourned and wept.

The bell is tolling in the old gray tower; the clergyman in his white surplice is standing just within the churchyard gates. As soon as he sees the procession draw near, he leaves the ivied porch, and coming forward bareheaded, takes a place beside the man who leads the singing. At the gates once more, the beautiful service is commenced: 'I am thc Resurrection and the Life.' Instantly every hat is removed as they pass into the sacred place. During the time occupied with the prayers, and up to the moment when all are gathered at the open graves, there is reverent silence, save indeed for the sobs of the young children, whose grief will not be controlled as they remember that they shall see these loved ones no more.

The minister's voice falters as he reads:—'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of His great mercy, to take to Himself the souls of our dear brothers here departed, we therefore commit their bodies to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.'

An old man who had stood by, now broke the stillness by saying: 'Sure and certain hope! Praise God! certain, certain for both of them: no doubt of that!'

When the clergyman closed his book, a collier, who had waited for the purpose, came to him and respectfully begged permission to sing a hymn at the grave.

'I hope you will do anything you wish,' the gentleman replied; 'you cannot do too much honour to the memory of the brave man or the poor boy whom we have just laid in the grave.'

The man touched his forehead as he retired; and in a moment, from about those two graves, in which

are buried so many hopes and loves, there rises on the sweet summer air, and echoes through the gray porches and tower of the old church, across the broad walks, and through the sheltering lime-trees, right up to heaven, that grand old hymn which is at once the fervent petition and triumphal song of those who trust in God:

'O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!'

When the whole of this has been sung, the earth is thrown over its kindred dust. Flowers and evergreens are laid on both graves in rich profusion, with loving words to the memory of the dead, and the people slowly depart.

John was only a common working man, who laboured at the bottom of a deep, dark mine: the boy was of the same order. Yet here are hundreds of people met to do honour to their memories. There is a reason: they were true servants of God, and He has said, 'them that honour Me, I will honour.'

* * * * *

The widows and the children return to their desolate homes; but the colliers themselves consult together, and it is decided to have a meeting of the men on the evening of the first 'Pay' day, for the purpose of making amongst themselves a collection for the bereaved families. This is done, and a considerable sum obtained. Mr. Cadwalladors name is down for the largest amount, as indeed his circumstances and position demand. Mr. Arkwright, the manager, is next.

'What can we do, Pansy? What can we give to this fund?'

'We must give all we can, Harry. I could never be happy again if we did not. I thought that if you were agreeable this might be a good thing. Listen a minute, dear.'

Harry Osbourn looked on his wife's earnest face with greater pride than he had ever done before, as she unfolded the plan she had intended to lay before him, if he had not first mentioned their putting their hand to this work.

'Well, Harry, we are having this holiday free of cost, you know.'

'Yes, Mr. Cardross's generous gift meets all travelling expenses; and thanks to our good uncle and aunt, there is nothing else to be met.'

'Then you know, Harry, your salary is going on while you are here.'

'Yes; go on.'

'There is just the rent of our house, with the taxes, to be met; that, for the present, is our only liability. I thought, Harry, that if you took from your salary for this time enough just to meet these two things, and gave the rest to this fund, it would be some trifle towards those little children's wants.—Stop a bit, Harry. Then you were going to give me a new velveteen dress. Well, suppose I do without it. If you don't mind, I am very willing to give it up. Altogether it will be a nice little sum.'

'So let it be, Pansy! As soon as we return home, we will send the sum you propose.'

'Then, Harry, there is another thing. We thought we could afford a servant soon.'

'Yes, Pansy, you shall have some one to help you very soon.'

'I thought,' the young wife went on to say, 'that it might be a good thing to take the eldest of those five little girls. She seems to be a nice little thing;

and as she is young, I could make her understand our ways, and teach her many things. I don't mean to take her from her mother now, but if you think it right to take her at all, she could be sent on in a short time.'

'A capital idea, Pansy,' said Harry: 'you are a dear good little woman to think of these things.'

'I don't see much goodness; but Harry, suppose anything dreadful happened to you, and I were left with five little girls alone in the world,—alone and without the means of finding them bread! Just think how dreadful it would be, and how thankful I should be for any help, however small!'

A silent prayer went up to God from the young husband's heart that He would spare his life for Pansy's sake.

At breakfast-time Harry mentioned his contribution, and Pansy's scheme for one child.

'Thanks, my boy,' said Mr. Cadwallador; 'the money will be a great help. As for the child, God has surely put that in your mind. It will be such a benefit to the girl, and a blessed thing for the poor mother to know with whom her child is placed. How strangely things seem to happen! We were so sorry that this accident should have occurred just now, when, as it seemed to us, you should have nothing but enjoyment. But "God moves in a mysterious way." It seems to have happened just at the right time. He knows best, Pansy.'

Mr. Arkwright is now seen coming up the garden-walk, and is soon in the room where our friends are seated. He has brought to Mr. Cadwallador the result of the inquest. He said that the inspector had been down and carefully examined the place, and that he had reported the mine to be well-managed

and well-worked as far as it was possible to judge. His impression was that some one had opened his lamp, although the person whose duty it was to see the lamps securely fastened, asserted that every one was locked when they left his hands. All who were examined gave similar evidence.

Ned was carefully examined by the coroner, but he roundly declared that he never opened or touched the Davy. 'He would take his solemn Bible oath' to it. No one could prove otherwise, although it was always suspected that Ned was the cause of the calamity in the Llanroth mine, and the deaths consequent on it. The verdict of the jury was 'Accidental death.'

'How is it,' Harry asks, 'that such things as these are so little known in the world? I am sure the things which I have heard and seen since I have been here, ought to be known.'

'Why, you see,' said the manager, 'it is all done underground. If half of the narrow escapes of some of us below were seen above, there would be great consternation. If half of the bold things performed by some of our black-handed men, were done in sight, men would be loud in their praise. The efforts to save life, in extreme danger to themselves,—as in the case of John Roberts—amounts to real heroism. I have seen men step forward, cool, calm, even dignified, when it has been asked, "Who will go?" even though there was the probability that they would never return. Imagine a brave deed on the battle-field,—there we have the noise of the cannon, the waving plumes, the inspiring sounds of music, the smile of officers, with the loud cries of the soldiers each urging the other on. Suppose a brave thing required beneath the earth,—it is dark and cold, no music, no glittering uniform, and no flashing

steel. What a man does there, he does because he is a man, and for his brother man.'

'I am so very thankful,' says Pansy, 'that this recent accident did not take place when we were down.'

'I should not have asked you to go on such a heavy day as that was. The men must go, but we would rather not have visitors at such times. Your holiday, Mrs. Osbourn, has, I fear, been sadly marred by this affair. I am very sorry.'

'That such a thing should have happened *at all*, we are both very sorry, Mr. Arkwright,' replied Harry, 'not sorry that it has happened at *this* time. I trust that both myself and my wife will go home better and wiser, with more love and sympathy towards others, from having been brought closer to them. I am afraid that the time when "The Rights of Man" and the "Common Brotherhood" talked of at "big meetings," shall be recognized by all, is not so near as is imagined.

'God help us each to do our part to make the world better, Mrs. Osbourn; things will come right in time.'





CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

> **'I saw one man, armed simply with God's Word,**
> **Enter the souls of many fellow-men,**
> **And pierce them sharply as a two-edged sword,**
> **While conscience echoed back his words again;**
> **Till even as showers of fertilizing rain**
> **Sink through the bosom of the valley clod,**
> **So their hearts opened to the wholesome pain,**
> **And hundreds knelt upon the flowery sod,**
> **One good man's earnest prayer the link**
> **'Twixt them and God.'—C. E. NORTON.**

IT is usual, in many places besides the Llanroth valley, to have what is called a *funeral sermon* when a person of any note has died. It is not at all likely that the recent deaths will be passed without notice. Mr. Arkwright mentions this to Mr. Osbourn, and asks:

'Could you not contrive to remain over the Sunday, so as to see the gathering there will be to hear something further of the poor fellows, and to be comforted by the words of the Preacher when he speaks of the home of the blessed ?'

'I hope you will, Harry,' said Mrs. Cadwallador. 'You will see a very nice side of the colliers' life. Try to stay,' she urged.

I am half disposed,' the young man said, 'and *Pansy,* if I judge rightly, is more than half disposed.'

After a moment's thought he said, 'I will write to Mr. Cardross to say that I will avail myself of his kind offer, and remain a day or two longer. Yes; we should like very much to stay.'

Sunday morning rose clear and bright. It has been decided that the service shall be held in a large field in a central place; the small places of worship in the neighbourhood will be closed, so that all their congregations may attend. The church service is not due at the time appointed for the field-preaching, so that all the singers of the choir will be there to help in the funeral hymn.

Our friends are on the ground in good time, and, like many others from a distance, are accommodated with seats. Several men and boys from the various schools and chapels bring forms and stools. 'For it it will be a long time for the "*wimmin*" to stand,' they say.

Now, from along the valley and on the hill-side, people come in companies of tens and twenties or more, until there are several hundreds congregated together. Here is John's widow, with her nine children: the old mother is there, too; a kindly farmer has lifted her and her easy-chair into his cart, and having brought her, places her by her daughter's side, promising to look out for her when the preaching is over. Here is the mother of the lost boy, with her five little girls; the eldest sees Mrs. Osbourn, and curtseys respectfully to the lady who, as she has learned, is to be her future mistress. The relatives of both families are gathered close to the sorrowful women, and are all, from the oldest to the youngest, dressed in black. The vast assemblage is, for the most part, devoutly waiting. The ministers from the various chapels are here, although none of them intend to do duty on this occasion.

The preacher is 'Tum,' by universal consent. He has not yet recovered from his injuries; the bandages are removed from his head and face, but one arm is yet slung by his side. He is very nervous as he gives out the first hymn, but his nervousness vanishes and his face lights up with holy joy as the music, not cultivated, indeed, but full of feeling and heartfelt devotion, rises from hundreds of voices, swells and echoes through the valley and over the hill-tops, as, to the tune of 'the Old Hundredth Psalm,' is sung this hymn:

'The morning flowers display their sweets,
And gay their silken leaves unfold
As careless of the moontide heats,
As fearless of the evening cold.

Nipt by the wind's unkindly blast,
Parched by the sun's directer ray,
The momentary glories waste,
The short-lived beauties die away!

So blooms the human face divine,
When youth its pride of beauty shows;
Fairer than spring its colour shine,
And sweeter than the virgin rose!

Or worn by slowly rolling years,
Or broke by sickness in a day,
The fading glory disappears,
The short-lived beauties die away!

Yet these, new-rising from the tomb,
With lustre brighter far shall shine;
Revive with ever-during bloom,
Safe from diseases and decline!

Let sickness blast, let death devour,
If heaven must recompense our pains;
Perish the grass, and fade the flower,
If firm the word of God remains!'

This is followed by prayer and another hymn, and

then 'Tum' reads his text from his well-known pocket Bible, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' The sermon was not very clever, I dare say; bad in arrangement and faulty in composition, very likely; but it came from a full and fervent heart. 'Tum' spoke of the confidence of the Christian in God; of the simple, honest faith of the poor boy; of the stronger, firmer hold of the elder man. He said that the best and truest man amongst them had been taken. Having fallen on the name of his friend, he felt compelled to speak of him,—of his zeal for God and souls,—of his most forgiving temper,—of his holy, blameless life,—of the manner of his death, and, in softened tones, why he died. With warning voice he spoke to the colliers, whose lives hung upon so slight a thread, urging them to make sure work for eternity, as their fellows 'just gone home' had done. Now with his maimed hand he pointed to where sat the sorrowful group of women and children, paused for a moment, and then said:—'Friends, God has left us these to take care of: He has made us His stewards.' He then concluded with such an appeal to the hearts of his hearers for 'the little' ones, that it was remembered for many years. Its effect was shown by the help that came in so readily and heartily, and which, placed to the fund already mentioned, was judiciously used for the benefit of the two women, and such of the children as were too young to do anything as yet. Eventually all the young people became useful and respectable members of society.

The dear old grandmother never quite recovered the shock occasioned by the death of her beloved son-in-law; but she lived a few years longer, blessing all about her by her loving words and counsel, and then quietly fell asleep in Jesus.

Mr. Arkwright continued the management of the Llanroth works, and also the superintendency of the Sunday-school. His wife is the same devoted little woman that we saw in her sunny home, and is as proud of her boys as ever, although they have exchanged the white frocks and blue shoes for knickerbockers and stout boots.

Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallador say that they are getting old, and are quietly waiting for the time when the Master shall say, 'Come up higher!'

Our young city friends left the valley and its inhabitants with regret, carrying with them deep and permanent sympathy for our colliers and their families. They did not forget their contribution to the fund, nor did they forget the widow's child, but fulfilled their intentions to the letter.

The colliers of Llanroth, and all other colliers, still work in the deep, dark and dangerous caverns beneath the outer world. Subtle foes, in the shape of gases, fire and flood, still lurk in holes and corners, ready to leap out upon them in such a moment as they think not.

For them let all Christian men and women pray with Jemmy in the bottom of the mine,

'From sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us!'





APPENDIX.

While the ink is yet damp on the paper whereon is traced the story of *Coal and Colliers*, the country is startled and shocked by the tidings of a terrible calamity which in another colliery district has befallen this class. I refer to the 'Haydock' Explosion, that burst on the hapless men, on the 7th of June of this year (1878), with such awful and deadly force that over two hundred of our fellow-creatures were swept away from friends, from home, and from life, in a few moments.

The sorrow and distress existing on the spot can neither be described nor imagined,—sorrow that can never be wiped away on earth. One hundred women are made widows, several hundreds of children are made orphans old men and women are left without the supporting care of their sons.

Help from every quarter comes in, to fill in some small measure the gap in the house where the bread-winner is taken from them. Funds are formed in the metropolis and other places.

There is aid from every place of note. Simpson's 'Bowl' is in its place on the Liverpool landing-stage; collections are being made in churches, chapels, schools, in public companies, and by private individuals; and these are added to the three thousand pounds which the colliers themselves have in the relief fund. But it must be years before many of the bereaved ones can help themselves, and the question comes to us, 'What is this among so many?'

Eloquent and most powerful sermons were preached in various towns and cities. A few extracts are taken from the papers of the day, which will convey some idea of the feeling existing in thoughtful minds.

The Rev. H. Siddal, Vicar of Ashton, in a sermon says:—'Of all those who died in that fearful pit, how many or how few went to Paradise no man could tell. God alone knew that, and many who had not lived godly lives might have breathed a dying prayer, heard and accepted for Jesus's sake. But that there was much wickedness among those who go down into the coal mines was the testimony of all who had been there. Let them, however, thank God that there were among the colliers many good men—many men of prayer. That many a prayer to God went up not one day, but every day, from the bowels of the earth; that even the wicked words of some drew forth the prayers of others for them as well as for themselves. That such was the case in that very mine he knew. There were in that very pit not a few who, even at their work, prayed both for themselves and others; and as God heard the cry of Jonah out of the whale's belly down in the depths of the sea, so they were sure He heard those prayers. No earnest prayer was ever breathed in vain. Of those whose spirits had now gone back to their Maker, some renewed their baptismal vows and were confirmed in that church twelve months ago. Some attended their Sunday-school, and some who seemed to have forgotten what they had learned of the way to heaven and had left the school, a few weeks ago came back of their own accord, God's Spirit having striven successfully with them. It was so striving with those who had survived. He was sure, by the pale faces and tearful eyes even of the mere lookers-on that he had seen in their churchyard during that week, that God had now touched many hearts. Let them cherish the impressions. Let not their thoughts be wholly given to this world, but let them seek in their own private prayers for God's mercy on the souls of others as well as on themselves.'




The Rev. W. Lefroy, preaching in St. Andrew's Church,

Liverpool, in the course of his sermon alluded to the explosion, and said: 'We cannot see a gas-jet, we ought not to see a fire in the room of the invalid for health, or of the robust for comfort, without reflecting on the coal-field and its victims among the living and the dead. Just ten days ago, and one of the underground factories rang with the noise of life, and the stir of labour, and the happy buzz of industry. Two hundred and thirty men left their homes on that Friday morning as the sun rose. They left their cottages to descend nearly one thousand feet to secure bread for their families and to caress the children of their loins. Many a collier, I have no doubt, braved every danger in the darkness, discomfort, and damp, and counted himself fully rewarded by the kiss of his infant. They went with their sealed lamps to their toil, loving each his wife and child as much as any of us, and contented with drudgery through the heavenly influences of children and of home. And you know the rest. About eleven in the morning a rumble, a throbbing of the earth, a column of smoke, and the issue is two hundred coffins, one hundred widows, and hundreds of orphans. This we know, but what arithmetic can represent the anguish, desolation, and suffering? We measure the depths of the mine, and the wealth it produces; we may calculate the charity which the calamity calls forth; we may even estimate the area over which the wave of sympathy has travelled, fertilizing and blessing where it has reached; but there is no machine to calculate the anguish of a young mother for her posthumous child; there is no figure to estimate the bitterness of a widow's heart; there is no exact science to register the bewilderment which seizes the soul of tender woman when her husband is scorched to death, and her children enquire, in happy ignorance, why their father does not come home to help her and play with them. These poor fellows are beyond the reach of our aid, for except the foundering of a ship, there is nothing so hopeless as an explosion; and think of this, I pray you. The coal which ministers to our comfort, facilitates invention, and in all ages has responded to man's advances in

civilization, contains within itself, in a condensed and portable form, a store of physical force of simply incredible amount. One pound weight of coal could be held in the hand of every one of my hearers. You may pulverize it to particles. But in its raw and lump state it is held together by a force which, when liberated and applied in the form of heat, is capable of lifting one million times its own weight twelve inches above itself. There is nothing like this is physics. Imagine, then, a force like this escaping from its age-long imprisonment, rising like a giant against every hindrance, material, natural and artificial, and, having cast off tons weight with greater ease than an infant does a soap-bubble in its play, springs upon living men, tearing from one a head, from others arms, from others limbs, leaving horses, wagons, and their drivers mutilated, naked, dead, and then retiring for a season in sickening silence, broken only by the reverberating roar of the ruin, and the wild wail of women as they recognized the scorched covering of the bread-winner, rendered hideous and unknown by the deadly destructive generated millions of ages before it sprang upon its victims. These are no less the living than the dead. For the latter I may not ask your aid. For the former, in God's name, and for Christ's sake, I entreat it.'

The Rev. H. Wilson, of Ashton, in a discourse on the sad event, says :—

'Most startling and thrilling is the history of coal-mining. The battle-field excepted, it has records of unparalleled disaster, and one of its most appalling and heart-rending events is the colliery explosion at Haydock last Friday week. Impressions soon fade and die, but the inhabitants of this district can never forget the Whitsuntide of 1878, when its annual rejoicing was turned into wide-spread mourning by the sudden and awful loss of two hundred precious lives. The family sorrows and deprivations this terrible accident has caused, no human imagination can describe or grasp.'

Telegrams from high and influential men reach Haydock. The following was received by Mr. Hedley from

Mr. Cross, Home Secretary :—'At once make every effort to save sufferers, if any, at any risk. I await particulars with deep anxiety. Express deep sympathy from me.'

Nothing gave so much pleasure, however, as the message from the Queen. It was as follows :—'Her Majesty has, through the Home Secretary, made enquiries and expressed her deep sympathy with the sufferers by the calamity.' This telegram was posted up outside the colliery soon after its receipt, and crowds of people quickly gathered to the spot. The utmost satisfaction was expressed at the kindly tone of the Royal message, and the words of the telegram were repeated from mouth to mouth, until their purport had spread over the whole neighbourhood.

Thank God, all hearts are filled with sympathy, and it is to be hoped with earnest faithful prayer for the widow and the fatherless. Again, let the prayer quoted by Jemmy to our friend Mrs. Osbourn in the bottom of the mine, be for ourselves and all men :—'From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death,

Good Lord, deliver us.'

The record given below, which must have required much research, time and labour, is copied from the *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser* for June 15th, 1878.

A RECORD OF COLLIERY ACCIDENTS.

The disastrous explosion at Haydock Colliery revives the interest in mining catastrophes of the past. In the remote ages of coal-mining, the record of accidents is more or less imperfect. By the aid of *Richardson and Latimer*, and other available sources, however, we are enabled to make the list as complete as it is possible it can be made. The slighter accidents we have not noted, as that would have made necessary an amount of space which we cannot devote to the subject, and so where the loss of life has only been small we have passed it over, unless some remarkable circumstance in connection with the catastrophe places it among those calling for special mention:

1648.—Aug.—By an extraordinary storm of wind and rain two of the best collieries on the Wear were drowned. Ten years after, in May, 1658, the colliery at Gallow Flat was inundated and a number of lives lost. Under date April 24, 1695, occurs the

following entry in St. Andrew's Register:—'Were buried, James Archer and his son Stephen, who, in the month of May, 1658, were drowned in a coal-pitt in the Gala Flat, by the breaking in of water from an old worke. The bodys were found intire after they had lyen in the water thirty-six years and eleven months.' The colliery referred to in the above extract, was at Elswick, where the prior of Tynemouth had also three other collieries five or six hundred years ago.

1710.—Bensham Colliery, where the first attempt was made to work the low main seam in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, exploded, causing the loss of from 70 to 80 lives.

1771.—Nov. 17—Wylam Colliery was inundated by the flood which destroyed Tyne Bridge; also North Biddock, Chatershaugh, and Low Lambton.

1772.—At Newton West Bank, near Morpeth, a man was shut up eight days in a coal-pit, with only a little water, which he collected in his shoe, for sustenance; he was dug out, and lived many years after.

1773.—Dec.—An explosion occurred at North Biddock, when a man, eleven boys, and four horses were destroyed.

1778.—Dec.—An explosion took place at Chatershaugh, resulting in the death of 24 persons.

1794.—By an explosion at Picktree Colliery, 30 persons were killed; 27 bodies were buried in one grave at Chester-le-Street.

1806.—March—An explosion took place at Killingworth, whereby 10 persons were killed.

1808.—An explosion at Harraton killed four men and 21 horses. At the end of four months, when the pit was re-opened, a pony was found alive and in good condition. The animal had a trick of slipping his halter, and was supposed to have set itself free before the explosion, and to have lived afterwards on the forage of its companions killed in the stable.

1809.—Sep.—By an explosion at Killingworth, 12 lives were lost.

1812.—Oct. 10—An explosion at Herrington Mill killed 23 persons and severely scorched several others.

1815.—June 2—An explosion at Newbottle killed 57 persons and six horses. On the 22nd of the same month and year 11 persons were killed by an explosion at Sheriff Hill.

1815.—Aug. 7—An engine, called the 'Iron Horse,' exploded at Newbottle Colliery; 57 bystanders were killed and wounded.

1816.—An explosion took place at Walbottle Colliery, when 14 persons were burnt.

1832.—May 9—An explosion at Springwell killed 47 persons and injured many more.—On June 15 of the same year, a boiler exploded at Newbottle Colliery, and 12 persons were killed.

1833.—May—An explosion at Springwell killed 47 persons and wounded many more.

1836.—Jan. 28—Twenty persons were killed by an explosion at Hetton.—In July of this year, five persons were killed by an explosion at Hebburn.

1837.—Dec. 6—An explosion at Springwell killed 27 men.

1838.—October 24—Explosion in 'John Pitt,' at Lowea, near Whitehaven. Killed—December 12, Wallsend. 11 killed.

1839.—February 18—Explosion in the 'William' coal-pit, Cumberland. 23 lost. June 28—St. Hilda's, South Shields. 50 lives lost. Nov. 8—Twelve lives sacrificed at Radstock, Wellsway.

1843.—April 7—Stormont Main, Newcastle. 27 killed.

1844.—Sep. 28—Haswell, between Durham and Sunderland. 95 lost.

1845.—Aug. 2—Crombach, near Merthyr Tydvil. 28 killed. Aug. 21—Jarrow, South Shields. 39 killed.

1846.—January 14—Risca black vein. 35 lost.

1847.—March 5—70 lost out of 100 in the Oaks, Barnsley.—June 29—Kirkless Hall, Wigan. 13 killed.

1848.—June 21—Victoria, Monmouth. 11 killed. Aug. 17—Newton, Seaham, Durham. 14 killed.

1849.—Jan. 24—Dernley Main, Barnsley. 75 lost. March 6—Middle Patricroft, Wigan. 12 killed. June 5—Hedburn, Newcastle. 33 killed. Aug. 11—Lletty Shenkin, Aberdare. 52 lost.

1850.—March 16—Rock Pit, Haydock. 11 killed. July 23—Commonhead, Airdrie. 19 lost. Nov. 11—Houghton, near Durham. 26 killed.

1851.—Dec. 20—Rawmarsh, Rotherham, 52 lost. March 15—Explosion of fire-damp in the Victoria Pit at Nitshill, near Paisley. 61 killed. Sept. 4—Aberdare. 14 killed.

1852.—May 10—Duffryn, Aberdare. 64 killed.

1853.—March 25—Arley, Wigan. 58 lost; 22 saved. July 1—Bent Grange, Oldham. 17 killed.

1854.—February 18—Arley, Wigan, again. This time 89 lives were lost and only a few saved.

1856.—July 16—Cymmer, Pontypridd. 114 lost.

1857.—Feb. 19—Lundhill, Barnsley. Nearly 200 lives lost.

1858.—Feb. 2—Bardsley, Ashton. 52 killed. Dec. 11—Tyldesley, Leigh. All killed; 25 in number.

1859.—April 6—Mair, Neath. Irruption of water. 26 drowned.

1860.—March 2—Burradon, Killingworth, Newcastle. 75 killed. Dec. 1—Risca, Newport. 142 killed.

1862.—Jan. 16—Great calamity at Hartley Colliery, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, when by the breaking of the engine beam, 200 persons were ultimately deprived of life. Feb. 19—Cethin, Wales. 49 killed. Dec. 8—Edmund's Main, Barnsley. Three explosions here, and 65 workmen killed.

1863.—Oct. 17—Morfa, Glamorganshire. 31 killed.

1865.—June 16—New Pit, Tredegar. 26 killed. Dec. 25—Upper Gethin, Wales. 30 killed.

1866.—Jan. 23—High Brook Colliery, Park Lane, Wigan. 30 deaths. Feb. 28—Bryn Moss. 5 killed. May 3—Garswood Park Colliery, Ashton. 12 deaths. June 14—Dukinfield, Ashton. 37 killed. Oct. 29—Pelton Fell, Newcastle. 24 killed. The most lamentable accident was the explosion at the Oaks Colliery, in Yorkshire, whereby 360 persons perished on the 12th of Dec., and on the following day there was another explosion at the same place, which caused 28 deaths. Dec. 13—Talk-o'-th'-Hill. 86 deaths.

1867.—Aug. 20—Garswood Colliery. 14 deaths. Nov. 8—Ferndale, South Wales, nearly 170 killed.

1868.—Nov. 26—Springs Colliery, Hindley Green. 62 lives lost. Dec. 21—Norley, Wigan. 8 killed. Dec. 30—Queen Pit, Haydock. 26 killed.

1869.—April 1—Highbrooks Colliery, Wigan. 37 killed. June 10—Ferndale, Glamorganshire. 60 killed. July 21—Queen Pit, Haydock. 59 lives lost. Nov. 15—Low Hall Colliery, Platt Bridge. 27 killed.

1870.— —Bryn Hall Colliery. 20 deaths.

1871.—Sept. 7—Moss Pits, Wigan. 70 lives lost. Thirteen days afterwards five of the men who were endeavouring to re-open the shafts fell victims to a second explosion. Nov. 13—Hindley Green Colliery. 6 lost.

Thirty-nine lives were lost by an explosion at Morley Main, on the 7th October, 1872; and on the 21st of November, 1872, 23 persons were killed by an explosion at Rawmarsh, also in Yorkshire.

1873.—Feb. 18—Talke Pit again. All killed, 20 in number. May 30—Bryn Hall, Wigan. All killed, 6 in number. Nov. 21—Mesnes Pit. Wigan. 7 killed.

1874.—April 14—Astley Deep Pit, Dukinfield, Manchester, Roof fell in. 51 lost. May 18—Norley Colliery. 4 killed. July 16—Ince Hall. 15 killed. Dec. 4—Bignall, North Staffordshire. 17 lost.

1875.—April 30—Bunker's Hill, Staffordshire. All killed, 42 in number. Dec. 6—Alexandra Pit, Wigan. Cage upset, and 7 killed. Dec. 7—Duffryn Pit, Tredegar. 20 killed. Dec. 7—Swaith, Barnsley. 140 killed.

1876.—Dec. 18—Abertillery, Monmouth. 20 killed.

1877.—Jan. 23—Home Farm Pit, Hamilton. Flooded; 4 men drowned. Oct. 12—Explosion in King Pit, Pemberton, near Wigan. 37 killed, including three of a band of explorers, Mr. Watkin, manager, Mr. Cooke, certificated manager, and Mr. Laverick, underlooker, who were suffocated by after-damp. Oct. 22—Explosion in Dixon's Pit, High Blantyre. 214 perished.

1878.—March 12—Kearsley, near Bolton. 43 lives lost.

The accident to which reference has been made so far winds up the fearful catalogue.

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